

Highways and Transport Committee

Agenda

Date:	Thursday, 19th June, 2025
Time:	6.00 pm
Venue:	The Capesthorpe Room - Town Hall, Macclesfield SK10 1EA

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision making meetings are audio recorded, and the recordings will be uploaded to the Council's website

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To note any apologies for absence from Members.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, other registerable interests, and non-registerable interests in any item on the agenda.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 10)**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 April 2025.

For requests for further information

Contact: Karen Shuker

Tel: 01270 686459

E-Mail: CheshireEastDemocraticServices@cheshireeast.gov.uk

4. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

In accordance with paragraph 2.24 of the Council's Committee Procedure Rules and Appendix on Public Speaking, set out in the [Constitution](#), a total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to put questions to the committee on any matter relating to this agenda. Each member of the public will be allowed up to two minutes each to speak, and the Chair will have discretion to vary this where they consider it appropriate.

Members of the public wishing to speak are required to provide notice of this at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

Petitions - To receive any petitions which have met the criteria - [Petitions Scheme Criteria](#), and falls within the remit of the Committee. Petition organisers will be allowed up to three minutes to speak.

5. **Draft Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) (Pages 11 - 96)**

To consider a report on the Draft Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).

6. **Bus Service Improvement Plan - 2025/26 Delivery Programme (Pages 97 - 144)**

To consider a report on the Bus Service Improvement Plan – 2025/26 Delivery Programme.

7. **Final Outturn 2024/25 (Pages 145 - 256)**

To receive a report which provides an overview of the Cheshire East Council final outturn for the financial year 2024/25.

8. **Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 - Part III s53 - Application CN-7-24 - Deletion of Public Footpath 19 in the Parish of Audlem (Pages 257 - 290)**

To consider an application to delete public footpath 19 in the Parish of Audlem.

9. **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Part III Section 53; Application MA/5/250 for the addition of two public footpaths between Public Footpaths 13 and 21 in the Parish of Mobberley. (Pages 291 - 326)**

To consider an application for the addition of two public footpaths between Public Footpaths 13 and 21 in the Parish of Mobberley.

10. **Highways Act 1989 section 118: Proposed extinguishment of Public Footpath No. 29 in the Parish of Knutsford (Pages 327 - 348)**

To consider an application to extinguish Public Footpath No. 29 in the Parish of Knutsford.

11. **Appointments to Sub-Committees, Working Groups, Panels, Boards and Joint Committees (Pages 349 - 356)**

To consider a report to nominate members to the bodies referred to in the report.

12. **Work Programme (Pages 357 - 360)**

To consider the Work Programme and determine any required amendments.

THERE ARE NO PART 2 ITEMS

Membership: Councillors S Adams, L Braithwaite (Vice-Chair), C Browne, A Burton, R Chadwick, P Coan, A Coiley, H Faddes, A Gage, M Goldsmith (Chair), C Hilliard, M Muldoon and M Sewart

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Highways and Transport Committee**
held on Thursday, 3rd April, 2025 in The Capesthorne Room - Town Hall,
Macclesfield SK10 1EA

PRESENT

Councillor M Goldsmith (Chair)
Councillor L Braithwaite (Vice Chair)

Councillors S Adams (Sub), L Braithwaite, A Burton, R Chadwick, A Coiley,
H Faddes, A Gage, M Muldoon, S Adams, M Sewart and D Edwardes (Sub)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Phil Cresswell, Executive Director Place
Paul Griffiths, Head of Strategic Infrastructure
John Lindsay, Definitive Map Officer
Adele Mayer, Definitive Map Officer
Tom Moody, Director of Transport, and Infrastructure
Nicola Lewis-Smith, Public Rights of Way Manager
Steve Reading, Principal Accountant
James Thomas, Solicitor
Karen Shuker, Democratic Services Officer

The Chair varied the order of business. Notwithstanding this the minutes are in the order of the agenda.

59 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Browne, P Coan and C Hilliard.

Councillors S Adams and D Edwardes attended as substitutes.

60 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

61 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2025 be approved as a correct record.

62 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

63 SERVICE BUDGETS 2025/26 (HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE)

The Committee considered the report which set out the proposed allocation of approved budgets for the Highways and Transport Committee, following approval of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy at full Council on 26 February 2025.

The details of the budget allocations were set out in Annex A to the report. Financial reporting would occur regularly to ensure budget adherence and prevent overspending. The financial reporting timetable for 2025/26 was set out in Annex B to the report.

Councillor M Brooks attended as a visiting Councillor and asked the following questions:

- 1) Did the £2.27m cover the cost of increased enforcement as a result of the increased operation of the car parks and did it include maintenance of the car parks?
- 2) Requested more detail in respect of the £450k increase in parking charges.
- 3) Requested more detail in respect of the £83k allocated to capital schemes, £56k to car park improvements and £27k to digital car parking solutions.

Officers agreed to provide a written response outside of the meeting.

In response to questions raised by Committee in respect of the following, officers agreed to provide a written response outside of the meeting.

- 1) What would be the financial impact on the Highways and Transport budget going forward as result of the exploration to reduce the capacity of Churchill Way and Dukes Street car parks in Macclesfield?
- 2) Was there an expected increase in revenue from penalty charge notices given the extended charging hours?
- 3) Car parking expenditure – was the cost of assessing any surplus car parking provision across the borough included in the expenditure for this financial year?

Members of the committee were asked to write to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure with any further enquires related to car parking.

A request was made by Committee for prominent signs to be displayed in car parks to ensure the public were well informed about the new charging policies in car parks to avoid any confusion and ensure compliance.

In relation to a question raised about investment in new technology, officers agreed to provide a briefing for members to share the innovative solutions that officers were looking at as potential investments for the future.

In response to a question about allocation of budget and any underspend officers undertook to engage with the committee on how any additional funding was allocated.

RESOLVED: That the Committee

1 note the decision of the Finance Sub Committee to allocate the approved revenue and capital budgets, related budget changes items and earmarked reserves to the Highways and Transport Committee, as set out in Annex A to the report.

2 note the financial reporting timetable for 2025/26, as set out in Annex B to the report, as approved at the Finance Sub Committee on 10 March 2025.

64 **GREATER BOLLIN TRAIL**

The Committee considered a report which highlighted the recent work undertaken to develop a walking, wheeling and cycling route within the north of the Borough known as the Greater Bollin Trail.

The work to date had been funded by a grant from the Shared Prosperity Fund and a feasibility study looked at how the route would look and how such a plan could be delivered.

The proposed route corridor would form part of the council's statutory plans going forward.

The Committee welcomed the concept and the strategic long-term thinking behind it and thanked officers for their hard work.

RESOLVED (Unanimously)

That the Committee

1. Support the concept and objectives of the Greater Bollin Trail, noting the indicative phasing approach as set out in Appendix 1 and that the general route corridor is included in the Council's Statutory Plans, including the newly emerging Local Transport Plan and Local Plan.

2. Delegate to officers to work with neighbouring authorities to ensure aspects of the route outside of Cheshire East are incorporated into their relevant statutory plans.

3. Delegate that the Head of Infrastructure works with key stakeholders to identify, develop and submit external funding bids to take forward to delivery elements of the route.

4. Delegate to the Head of Infrastructure and Head of Estates authority to enter into agreements, licences, easements for the acquisition of land or other rights required for the scheme, in consultation with the S151 Officer and the Executive Director of Place.

The Committee adjourned for a short break.

Councillor D Edwardes left the meeting and did not return.

65 WILDLIFE & COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 - PART III, S53 - DMMO APPLICATION CN-7-24: TO DELETE FP19 IN THE PARISH OF AUDLEM

Prior to consideration of the item a request was received to ask that the Committee consider deferring the item out of respect for the family involved with the application, who were dealing with a bereavement.

Officers confirmed that there was no technical reason why the report could not be deferred, and following a thorough discussion about the deferral of the application by Committee it was proposed and seconded that the application be deferred to the next Committee. This was carried by majority.

RESOLVED: (By majority)

That the report be deferred.

66 WILDLIFE & COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 - PART III, S53 - DMMO APPLICATION MA-5-240 MOTTRAM ST. ANDREW FP26 UPGRADE

The Committee considered a report which outlined the investigation into an application made to amend the Definitive Map and Statement to upgrade existing public footpath no:26 to a Restricted Byway along Smithy Lane in the parish of Mottram St Andrew under Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The investigation included a discussion carried out in respect of the claim, the historical evidence and legal test for a Definitive Map Modification Order to be made.

The Committee considered the application and evidence as set out within the report and agreed that the evidence that had been submitted with the application and that considered during the subsequent consultation and investigation was considered insufficient in showing that the details contained in the Definitive Map and Statement should be modified.

RESOLVED: (unanimously)

That the Committee:-

1. Agree that a Definitive Map Modification Order not be made under Section 53(3)(c)(i) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to modify the Definitive Map and Statement to upgrade Public Footpath no 26 between points A and B on Plan no: WCA/50.

2. That the application for the upgrade of Public Footpath No 26 to a Restricted Byway is refused on the grounds that it cannot be demonstrated that the Definitive Map and Statement needs modifying.

67 WILDLIFE & COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 - PART III, S53 - DMMO APPLICATION MA-5-244 TO ADD A BRIDLEWAY AND UPGRADE TO BRIDLEWAY IN PARISH DISLEY

The Committee considered a report which outlined the investigation into an application made to modify the Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way to add a Bridleway between Buxton Old Road and Footpath 39, Parish of Disley, and upgrade (in part) to Bridleway Public Footpath 39.

The investigation included a discussion of the consultations carried out in respect of the claim, the documentary and witness evidence investigated and the legal tests for the making of a Definitive Map Modification Order ("DMMO").

The Committee considered the evidence submitted and application to amend the Definitive Map and Statement in adding a Bridleway between Buxton Old Road and Footpath 39, Parish of Disley, Page 269 Agenda Item 9 and upgrade (in part) to Bridleway Public Footpath 39.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

1. Agree that a Definitive Map Modification Order be made under Sections 53(3)(c)(i) and 53(3)(c)(ii) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to upgrade (in part) Disley Footpath 39 to Bridleway from points A – B of Plan No WCA/049 of Appendix 1 and to add a Bridleway between Buxton Old Road and Disley Footpath 39 Disley, from points B – C of Plan No WCA/049 of Appendix 1, in the Parish of Disley.

2. Agree that public notice of the making of the Order be given and in the event of there being no objections within the period specified, the Order be confirmed in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Council by the said Act.

3. Note that in the event of objections being received, Cheshire East Borough Council be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or Public Inquiry.

68 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme.

In response to a request for a committee agenda item in respect of the displacement of cars from car parks and the receipts from car parks in the form of free towns it was suggested that officers provide a member briefing rather than a report come to committee as there would be no decision for committee to make.

The Chair acknowledged a request for a detailed financial report on parking, including capital and revenue expenditure, and income, by car park from December to March, with a review after six months. However, it was noted that this level of detail had not been provided before and that when the Committee reviewed their budget this would not cover such granular detail.

It was suggested that a task and finish group be set up to review the ward member budget scheme to decide whether it was delivering value for money.

It was requested that the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BCIP) report which was coming to June Committee include further detail on bus service levels that had been asked at a previous meeting.

Following several questions in respect of the financial information in respect of car parking revenue it was explained that any revenue received formed part of the council's general fund. The Council had accessed exceptional financial support and as there were technicalities related to that it was suggested that if members had further questions, they may want to send them to the S151 officer who had that statutory duty in relation to the council's accounts.

The Committee thanked Highways officers for all their hard work.

It was agreed that the June Committee would be held as a twilight meeting, starting at 6.00pm.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.05 pm

Councillor M Goldsmith (Chair)

OPEN

Highways & Transport Committee

19 June 2025

Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)

Report of: Tom Moody, Director of Transport and Infrastructure

Report Reference No: HTC/10/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: All wards

Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report provides an overview of work to date on updating the Cheshire East Active Travel Strategy (see Appendix 1) and progress in developing Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) across the borough (see Appendix 2). The report seeks approval to launch a public consultation this summer to enable local communities to comment and shape the emerging strategy and infrastructure proposals.
- 2 Committee is responsible for developing policies and making decisions on matters relating to highways and transport as they affect the policies of the Council and residents throughout the borough of Cheshire East. The Active Travel Strategy contributes to the Cheshire East Plan aims of 'unlocking prosperity for all' and 'improving health and well-being'.

Executive Summary

- 3 The Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 (adopted in February) sets out new commitments for the borough. The Council has clear ambitions for delivering sustainable and inclusive economic growth, and environmental and health improvement. A key element of achieving these ambitions is delivering investment in transport infrastructure that promotes active travel. A step change in levels of walking and cycling will support wider strategic priorities.
- 4 The existing Cycling Strategy 2017-2027 was prepared pre-pandemic, and prior to many policy changes and new guidance which has emerged,

including: Gear Change (2020), the Transport Decarbonisation Plan (2021) and Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2 (2022), as well as new cycle infrastructure design guidance.

- 5 The Cycling Strategy focused on a single mode only, without consideration of the interfaces with walking and wheeling, which have subsequently been emphasised in national policy. The government considers 'active modes' (walking, wheeling and cycling) holistically. This direction can be seen in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy and the expectation for local authorities to develop Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).
- 6 An Active Travel Strategy will be a supplementary "daughter" document to the emerging Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the draft document is aligned with the vision, aims and priorities of the new LTP.
- 7 Importantly, Active Travel England (ATE) expect local authorities to complete an active travel capability self-assessment each year, which is then assessed by ATE to assign a level to which a local authority is performing, ranging from levels 0 (lowest) to level 4 (highest). Cheshire East is currently classified as level 1 and there is ambition and commitment to progress through the levels. Those authorities performing at a higher level have greater access to funding.
- 8 Developing a new strategy and infrastructure plans is a key part of demonstrating our ambition and commitment, with clear recognition that increasing levels of active travel supports the delivery of wider corporate priorities, particularly health improvement and local action to tackle the climate change emergency.
- 9 The draft vision for the Active Travel Strategy is "*A borough where walking, wheeling and cycling are the preferred option for short journeys, achieved through a connected, safe and accessible network that supports a healthy Cheshire East.*" The strategy is framed around three clear themes: create, culture and collaborate.
- 10 The Council has LCWIPs for Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield and Wilmslow which were adopted in March 2021 and remain current and valid. These four areas were selected following an evidence-based review, which identified them as having the highest potential in the borough to increase walking and cycling.
- 11 LCWIPs have now been prepared for the remaining 7 towns (see Appendix 2), which complement the emerging strategy and support the delivery of the "create" theme to develop high quality active travel infrastructure at key locations across the borough.

- 12 A consultation is proposed to seek the views of stakeholders, residents and community groups on the draft strategy and the latest LCWIPs which set out proposed interventions and scheme prioritisation. A Consultation & Engagement Plan and Communications Plan are included at Appendix 3 and 4 respectively.
- 13 This report also seeks delegated authority to spend the Council's Consolidated Active Travel Fund (CATF) allocation of £813,292 (£565,019 capital and £248,273 revenue), which will fund high-quality walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure, measures to build capability and behaviour change activities. The Council is currently developing a full programme of initiatives to be delivered under CATF.
- 14 The CATF grant was announced after the MTFS was approved on 26 February 2025 and therefore fully funded supplementary estimates are required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways & Transport Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the draft Active Travel Strategy at Appendix 1 and the LCWIPs summarised in Appendix 2 as a basis for public consultation, taking into account the desire to improve the Council's performance rating in future ATE assessments.
2. Approve the proposed approach to consultation in line with the Consultation & Engagement Plan at Appendix 3 and Communications Plan at Appendix 4.
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to finalise the consultation material and undertake the public consultation.
4. Approve the fully funded Supplementary Revenue and Capital Estimates for the value of revenue funding £248,273 and capital funding £565,019.
5. Delegate authority to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to spend the Council's Consolidated Active Travel Fund (CATF) allocation of £813,292 (£565,019 capital and £248,273 revenue) in line with our strategy and infrastructure delivery plans.

Background

- 15 The vision and aims of the strategy have been identified and discussed amongst key Council service areas, noting that an increase in active travel trips supports wider strategic goals, including health, economy and the environment. It is the intention for a succinct yet ambitious strategy that provides a clear strategic direction. Targets have been identified to

show commitment both locally and nationally and will support the government's ambition for 50% of all journeys in towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled.

- 16 The draft Active Travel Strategy sets out clear actions, including development of specific infrastructure plans and supporting policies to deliver the wider aims, including the Access Control Barrier Policy. The strategy provides the overarching vision and framework that sets the direction for these more specific policies.
- 17 Development of an Active Travel Key Route Network will help inform investment and maintenance decisions as part of the over-arching Highways Asset Management Framework.
- 18 The Department for Transport (DfT) guidance states that 'whilst the preparation of LCWIPs is non-mandatory, local authorities who have plans will be well placed to make the case for future official investment'. LCWIPs provide strong evidence to support future funding from DfT, Active Travel England, Sustrans and other external funding bodies, as well as through the Local Transport Plan allocations and developer contributions from the planning process.
- 19 Active Travel England (ATE) has provided Capability Funds to local authorities since 2021. This funding has enabled the development of LCWIPs for the remaining 7 towns across the borough (see list below).
 - Alsager
 - Handforth
 - Knutsford
 - Middlewich
 - Nantwich
 - Poynton
 - Sandbach

Committee should note that LCWIPs for Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield and Wilmslow were developed and approved in 2021. These documents remain relevant and will work concurrently with the new plans to provide a comprehensive framework for the whole borough.

- 20 All key towns with over 10,000 residents are now covered by an LCWIP, which have identified a prioritised programme of potential active travel routes and infrastructure improvements for future investment. The improvements are evidence-based and take account of the volumes of cycling and pedestrian movements in Cheshire East, and the potential to increase these mode shares to achieve wider strategic outcomes.

- 21 All schemes identified in LCWIPs will be subject to further detailed development and design work, with extensive public consultation necessary before schemes are implemented.
- 22 It is recognised that the delivery of the prioritised LCWIP routes is not funded at this stage. They establish a plan for improvements that can help in securing future funding from a wide range of sources.
- 23 Delivery of individual projects identified in the LCWIPs will be embedded into the annual capital programmes and active travel pipeline programme. Adjacencies with external funding opportunities will be sought to maximise delivery and value to the authority.

Consultation and Engagement

- 24 Engagement with Council officers from across the service areas was integral to setting the strategic direction of the emerging Active Travel Strategy, particularly health improvement, regeneration and environment.
- 25 A period of stakeholder and public consultation is proposed in summer 2025. Views will be sought from across the walking, wheeling and cycling communities, as well as town and parish councils, active travel groups, wider stakeholders, local businesses and residents.
- 26 The consultation will primarily be online with paper copies available in libraries and customer contact centres. A Consultation & Engagement Plan has been developed in conjunction with the Council's Research & Consultation Team (see Appendix 3), as well as a Communications Plan (see Appendix 4).
- 27 Town councils and local interest group representatives were invited to engage via a workshop during the development of the draft LCWIPs, to ensure that local knowledge of specific issues was captured in the interventions proposed for each route.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 28 Development of an Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs is key to demonstrating strong local leadership for walking, cycling and wheeling. The consultation will take place at a formative stage, time for consideration and response will be given to feedback and thorough consideration will be given to points raised where appropriate. The consultation on these documents and gaining public input towards the plans will ensure that the Council will have robust plans in place to prioritise the future active travel network in line with potential future funding opportunities.

Other Options Considered

- 29 The DfT has noted that LCWIPs are not mandatory documents but that local authorities who have plans will be well placed to make the case for future investment. ATE's local authority capability self-assessment included scoring for the development and publication of LCWIPs.
- 30 Therefore, not updating our strategy or continuing to develop LCWIPs would likely result in avoidable constraints for securing external funding. It could also suggest to external funding bodies that there is a lack of local leadership for active travel in the borough.

Option	Impact	Risk
Progress without consultation	Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs progressed without public input	Lack of opportunity for the public to input and help shape the documents.
Progress without consultation	Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs progressed without public input	Constraints for securing external funding.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 31 As the local transport authority, Cheshire East Council has a legal duty to maintain a safe and efficient highway network. Developing a cohesive, integrated high-quality walking and cycling network will contribute to fulfilling this legal duty.
- 32 In developing future schemes, the appropriate legal processes will need to be followed for the implementation of schemes e.g. Traffic Regulation Orders.
- 33 Committees are responsible for discharging the Council's functions, monitoring financial controls and making decisions as required.
- 34 Chapter 2, Part 4 of the Council's constitution details that the Highways and Transport Committee is responsible for developing policies and making decisions on matters relating to highways and transport within the area.
- 35 Where local authorities undertake consultations, there is a duty to engage in lawful and fair consultation. The Gunning principles establish the

common law principles to be observed when undertaking a consultation will require the following:

- i) The consultation to be undertaken when the proposal(s) is still at a formative stage;
- ii) That there are sufficient reasons put forward for the proposals to allow for intelligent consideration and response from consultees;
- iii) That consultees are given adequate time to respond; and
- iv) That the product of the consultation was to be conscientiously taken into account when the decision is taken.

36 In accordance with Chapter 3, Part 3, where services wish to undertake an activity not originally identified in the budget or incur additional revenue expenditure on an existing activity, approval must be sought for a supplementary estimate. Successful grant applications will require a supplementary estimate to incur spending. Supplementary estimates of a value between £500,000 and £1,000,000 are required to be approved by Committee.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

37 In March 2025, ATE awarded Cheshire East Council £813,292 from the Consolidated Active Travel Fund (CATF) for the 2025/26 financial year. ATE determined the allocation based on the borough's population size and the Council's current capability rating. The CATF allocation grant is split into revenue and capital payments, as set out in the table below.

Consolidated Active Travel Fund 2025/26 – Cheshire East		
Capital	Revenue	Total
£565,019	£248,273	£813,292

38 The CATF is intended to be used for delivery of high-quality walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure, capability building measures and behaviour change activities.

39 The consultation on both the Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs will be funded by the Consolidated Active Travel Fund (CATF). The Council is currently developing the full delivery programme of schemes that will be funded by the CATF.

40 Upon completion and adoption by the Council, the LCWIPs will provide a prioritised programme of route interventions and schemes to inform the annual capital programme for transport. The schemes will be developed

utilising funding from a range of sources including: LTP Integrated Transport Block; Section 106 & 278; the Council’s capital and revenue programmes and external grant funding.

- 41 These grants were announced after the MTFS was approved on 26 February 2025 and therefore fully funded supplementary estimates are required.
- 42 The Council’s capital programme remains under review with any schemes requiring Council resources being challenged in order to reduce the call on prudential borrowing.

Policy

- 43 The Active Travel strategy and its associated initiatives align well with the Councils corporate policies and transformation plan. In particular, they encourage sustainable travel choices for work-related trips, contributing to our Corporate Travel Plan and the equivalent plans in other organisations across the borough.
- 44 The Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs support the delivery of the Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 (adopted in February) which sets out the corporate plan vision and commitments, as well as the emerging LTP.

An open and enabling organisation	A council which empowers and cares about people	A thriving and sustainable place
<p>Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making</p> <p>Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation</p>	<p>Reduce health inequalities across the borough</p>	<p>A great place for people to live, work and visit</p> <p>To reduce the impact on our environment</p> <p>A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel</p> <p>To be carbon neutral by 2027</p>

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 45 The Council will fully evaluate the equality implications of the proposed Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs through an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). The draft EqIA has been developed which focuses on the protected characteristic groups (age, disability, gender

reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership).

- 46 There is a need to engage with the protected groups to help better understand any impacts and identify mitigation if required. The EqIA will be updated following consultation with protected equality groups, particularly young people, older people and people with disabilities. An EqIA will be required for each LCWIP route taken forward to design and delivery in due course. The draft EqIA is included at Appendix 5.

Human Resources

- 47 There are no direct implications for Human Resources.

Risk Management

- 48 In terms of governance, the Active Travel Strategy and LCWIP development has been regularly monitored through the Active Travel Board.
- 49 Risk registers and risk assessments have been produced as part of the Council's standard approach to project management and governance for both strategy and infrastructure development and delivery.

Rural Communities

- 50 All key towns with over 10,000 residents are now covered by an LCWIP. Being the largest areas, there is the potential to increase these mode shares to achieve wider strategic outcomes.
- 51 The rural areas will require a tailored approach to reflect local needs for active travel – both for everyday journeys and leisure trips as part of the visitor economy.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 52 The LCWIPs have considered routes to schools as part of the evidence base in defining priority routes and potential interventions. The relationship to designated Available Walking Routes to school (for children within statutory walking distance) will also be fully assessed.
- 53 Any routes taken forward to design would aim where possible to be in line with Local Transport Note 01/20 – Cycle Infrastructure Design and therefore aimed to be suitable for a competent 12-year-old. Pedestrian infrastructure should follow best practice including guidance set out in the Manual for Streets 1 & 2. Routes in the vicinity of schools could be

considered as part of the Council's Sustainable Modes of Travel to School programme.

Public Health

- 54 There are significant health benefits from active travel which are proven and well-documented. Creating and encouraging opportunities to build active travel into everyday lives will positively impact health outcomes.
- 55 Regular walking and cycling help people meet the recommended physical activity targets, improves physical and mental health, whilst reducing the risks of poor health and premature death. The delivery of the strategy and implementation of the LCWIP priorities will help to reduce health inequality across the borough.

Climate Change

- 56 Cheshire East Council have committed to be carbon neutral by 2027 and to influence carbon reduction across the borough in order to become a carbon neutral borough by 2045. The Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs would enhance active travel infrastructure and help encourage walking, wheeling and cycling as a mode of travel and support carbon reduction and more sustainable travel.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy) :</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	05/06/25	05/06/25
Janet Witkowski	Acting Monitoring Officer	05/06/25	05/06/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Nick Wrigley	Senior Lawyer, Place	13/04/25	17/04/25
Mandy Withington	Principal Lawyer, Place	13/04/25	17/04/25

Steve Reading	Finance Manager	13/04/25	17/04/25
<i>Other Consultees:</i>			
<i>Executive Directors/Directors</i>			
Tom Moody	Director of Transport and Infrastructure	23/04/25	25/04/25
DMT		08/05/25	08/05/25
CLT		21/05/25	21/05/25
Chair / Vice Chair		23/05/25	02/06/25
Phil Cresswell	Executive Director, Place	06/06/25	09/06/25

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Richard Hibbert, Richard.hibbert@cheshireeast.gov.uk Head of Strategic Transport and Parking
Appendices:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Active Travel Strategy 2. LCWIP summary 3. Consultation and Engagement Plan 4. Communications Plan 5. Equality Impact Assessment
Background Papers:	None

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Cheshire East Active Travel Strategy

A strategy for walking, wheeling & cycling

Draft for consultation – June 2025

1. Introduction

Our Active Travel Strategy sets out the vision for walking, wheeling¹ and cycling across Cheshire East. We want to create a culture where active modes are the first consideration for local journeys, with individuals having the tools and infrastructure to travel safely, efficiently and with confidence.

The benefits of increasing use of active modes for travel are clear. For the individual:

 It supports a healthy lifestyle – travelling actively can form part of your daily routine particularly for short, local journeys. Exercising, which includes walking and cycling, just once or twice a week can reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and other major illness (Live Well, Cheshire East).

 It is more affordable – with no significant cost per kilometre travelled, travelling actively can save you money compared to a journey by car.

Benefits are also community wide, including:

 It is better for the environment – walking, wheeling and cycling in place of the private car will reduce carbon emissions associated with travel. With 34% of carbon emissions from transport, a reduction in vehicle kilometres would support a lowering of emissions with a positive impact on air quality.

 It can take vehicles off the road – travelling actively instead of using a private car can help support the efficiency of the road network, with reduced vehicle kilometres resulting in less impact on road condition.



It supports the vitality of town centres and community spaces – providing permeable, attractive and connected routes, particularly for pedestrians, can encourage linked-trips between different public amenities and maximise the amount of time and money spent in our town centres.

However, there are challenges and travelling by active modes is not always the natural first choice across the borough. Barriers exist, such as perceptions of safety, available routes and infrastructure, confidence and length of journey required. It is acknowledged that not all trips can be undertaken by active modes. However, we are committed to enabling and encouraging more people to choose walking, wheeling and cycling for short, local journeys or as part of a longer public transport journey.

This strategy provides a clear vision and actions to support an increase in the number of walking, wheeling and cycling trips made across Cheshire East.

1.1 Background and Policy Context

The strategy will replace the existing Cheshire East Cycling Strategy (2017), bringing our vision up to date and ensuring a more holistic, active travel approach, rather than solely focusing on one mode. This provides the opportunity to create an up-to-date vision that responds to our rapidly changing world.

The existing Cycling Strategy, and other relevant documents including the Local Transport Plan (LTP), were prepared pre pandemic, and prior to many recent changes in national transport policy including but not limited to: Gear Change (2020), The Transport Decarbonisation Plan (2021) and the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2023). In addition, there is emerging evidence and strategy at the pan-Northern level by Transport for the

¹ Wheeling refers to the activity of moving using a wheeled mobility aid, such as a wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

North including the Strategic Transport Plan and supporting documentation. The publication of cycle infrastructure design guidance (LTN1/20) also set new standards on the design of high-quality, safe infrastructure, providing a focus on how to best deliver improvements.

A new Local Transport Plan and a new Rights of Way Improvement Plan are in development for Cheshire East, and this Active Travel Strategy aligns to their emerging visions, providing a focus for walking, wheeling and cycling that will sit underneath these statutory documents.

Also supporting this strategy, and responding to our commitments as the Council, we are developing Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) for the key service centres in the borough. 61% of the Cheshire East population live in urban areas and there are significant opportunities to enable and encourage active travel for short, local journeys. The Active Travel Strategy also equally applies to rural areas and the application will need to be tailored to needs in the local communities where the population is more dispersed over a larger geographical area.

Within these plans, key routes have been identified for improvements and ranked on how quickly they can be implemented and on their deliverability. These plans will play an integral role in the delivery of this strategy and achieving the targets we are measuring our progress against.

However, we must remain mindful of our ability to access the level of funding needed to deliver the network and measures required to influence and achieve a notable change in travel behaviour. This strategy aims to provide a framework to achieve our vision, explained in Section 3.

2. Challenges and opportunities

To increase the numbers walking, wheeling and cycling in the borough, we need to be mindful of the challenges and how these barriers can be overcome whilst also considering the opportunities that exist. There is a focus on enabling and encouraging active travel for short, local journeys.

The key challenges

Perceived safety in travelling actively	Perceptions of safety are a key challenge to encouraging further journeys on foot or by cycle, with main barriers including a lack of confidence, limited continuous or connected infrastructure and lack of lighting.
The quality of infrastructure discourages travel by active modes	The increasing need for maintenance to our network, as a result of vehicle kilometres, severe weather impacts and natural growth, can lead to degradation of infrastructure including potholes, lighting and obstructions which limit the confidence and accessibility to travel actively.
Lack of physical activity and poor health	Across Cheshire East, 62.5% of adults are classified as obese or overweight, with 22.4% physically active for less than 30 minutes a week. Crewe is in the top 20% most deprived areas nationally for child poverty and the elderly living alone, and for deaths from respiratory diseases.
Difficulty in accessing services by active modes, particularly in urban areas	Poor conditions for walking, wheeling and cycling can result in Transport Related Social Exclusion (TRSE), which is the inability to access opportunities, key services, and community life, and facing major obstacles through the wider impacts of having to travel. In Cheshire East, 7.1% of the population live in exclusion, predominately focused in the urban centres, particularly north of Crewe, Sandbach,

	Middlewich, Congleton, north of Macclesfield, Knutsford and Handforth.
Insufficient active travel routes lead to reliance on the private car	With approximately 85% of households owning a car in 2021, Cheshire East has a higher level of car dependency compared to both England (76%) and the North West (75%). Cheshire East also has more households with multiple cars (33%) compared to the national average (26%), suggesting a larger household dependency on cars. In 2019, transport was responsible for 34% of carbon emissions in Cheshire East, which was the second biggest source of emissions.

The key opportunities

Improving public health	Active people live healthier, longer and happier lives, with physical activity reducing the risk of disease. More walking, wheeling and cycling can contribute to improved health.
Supporting our town and local centres	Active travel has a key role to play in increasing linked trips in town and local centres, increasing footfall, dwell time and spend, boosting the economy and enhancing places for people.
High potential for a shift to more sustainable travel	Short trips have the most potential for walking, wheeling and cycling and an estimated 60% of car trips in Cheshire East are under 10km in distance. 69% of the borough's population has a medium or high potential for mode shift, with urban areas such as Crewe and Macclesfield providing a great opportunity.
Collaboration with partners	Working with local communities, town and parish councils and major employers will provide opportunities to jointly

and the community to develop active travel solutions	identify needs and collaboratively develop solutions that can be delivered effectively.
Technology can support active journeys	Technology provides a real opportunity to support an individual's travel on foot, wheels or by cycle, including route planners or journey times, supporting informed decision making. In addition, advances in e-bikes can also support journeys by cycle.

3. Our vision

3.1 Active travel in Cheshire East

We have an ambitious vision for active travel in the borough. We want to see a significant increase in the numbers travelling on foot, wheels or by cycle and commit to the following vision to provide the infrastructure and culture needed to succeed.

Our vision is:

A borough where walking, wheeling and cycling are the preferred option for short journeys, achieved through a connected, safe and accessible network that supports a healthy Cheshire East

3.2 Themes

To deliver on our vision, and overcome the challenges and take advantage of opportunities, we have defined three priority themes. These have been identified through internal workshops and discussions, with the aim to consider active travel in the broader strategies, planning and delivery in the borough.

Our themes - CREATE – CULTURE – COLLABORATE - will together help facilitate active modes being the first choice for appropriate journeys. The themes should not be taken in isolation but integrated into one overarching approach to support better outcomes and deliver demonstrable change.



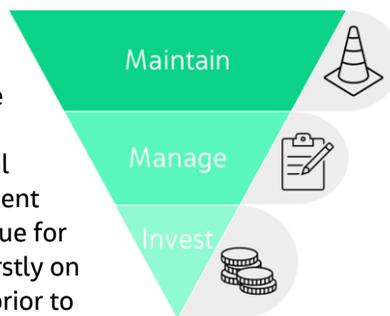
-  Create – our aim is to create a more connected network for walking, wheeling and cycling
-  Culture – our aim is to support a culture where walking, wheeling and cycling are the natural travel choice for local, short journeys
-  Collaborate – our aim is to collaborate with local communities, businesses and within Cheshire East Council to create a unified approach to walking, wheeling and cycling.

Within each theme, we have identified objectives and required actions to influence greater uptake of active travel journeys. These themes will be the basis of delivering on the opportunities and finding solutions to the challenges within Cheshire East.

4. Create

To encourage uptake in travel by walking, wheeling and cycling, there needs to be accessible, safe and connected infrastructure in place that supports people to get to where they need to.

We are mindful of limited funding and the need to ensure we prioritise spending in those areas that will bring the most benefit, alongside ensuring that our existing asset delivers its potential. Therefore, we will adopt a hierarchical approach of Maintain-Manage-Invest – an efficient delivery model that balances user need and value for money. This will focus funding and resources firstly on maintenance to ensure safety and availability, prior to developing new infrastructure.



Maintain: Our existing walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure needs to be maintained and it is a priority that this asset continues to be fit for purpose and attractive to use. This will include updating of road markings and signage to meet our safety policies, as well as the management of vegetation to ensure safe passage for everyone.

Manage: By assessing barriers to movement, identifying gaps in the existing network and delivering on quick wins, we can enhance the existing network to improve access and safety for users. This could be additional crossings or addressing missing sections of cycleway or footway, that open up the existing infrastructure to more people.

Invest: Where no suitable walking, wheeling or cycle infrastructure currently exists, but a need has been identified, sustainable investment in new facilities and infrastructure may be required. This will be targeted at locations that provide the most benefit to the most people, for example our key urban centres, and support delivery against the targets and vision of this strategy. This is expected to require external funding to deliver.

Our aim for this theme is to:

Create a more connected network for walking, wheeling and cycling.

Our key priorities for this theme are:

- Developing our active travel network through an efficient Maintain-Manage-Invest approach.
- Providing improvements that support the safety of active travel users on our network.
- Supporting connections to key places within our urban centres.

We will do this by:

- Adopting the Maintain-Manage-Invest hierarchy when considering all projects, policy and development, to ensure funding is best allocated and that we make better use of our existing asset.
- Developing an active travel 'Key Route Network' to support prioritisation of maintenance, ensuring safe passage for everyone.
- Developing a borough-wide LCWIP that draws together the individual town networks, providing a broader strategic plan.
- Managing the existing network, identifying gaps and seeking opportunities for quick wins, including the provision of secure cycle parking and maintenance hubs in busy locations such as Crewe and Macclesfield train stations.
- Developing policy and guidance to support network improvements and deliver effective design including documents emerging through the Local Plan.
- Identify investment opportunities to support with the delivery of the LCWIPs and incorporate future maintenance into scheme costs.

- Improving signage and wayfinding around urban centres and encouraging use of new technologies to improve navigation and linked trips.
- Identify opportunities to manage and maintain cycle traffic through roadworks, noting the importance to prioritise active travel movements during periods of works.

5. Culture

To complement the network infrastructure, we need to foster a culture that prioritises the use of more sustainable modes of travel. We cannot expect to see increased numbers of those walking, wheeling and cycling with infrastructure alone. Providing the tools, knowledge and support will help individuals and wider communities make informed choices on how best to make each journey.



Supporting individuals through the provision of one-to-one support and signposting will help with travel choices. Working with social prescribers, based in all GP surgeries, will provide an opportunity to support people to reach their health and

wellbeing goals, promoting being more active, spending more time outside and reducing reliance on other forms of transport.

Working with schools can introduce the benefits of using active modes for short journeys, such as to school, from an early age. Encouraging the development and monitoring of School Travel Plans and prompting discussions between children and adults on their journeys, can further influence travel behaviour. Relationship building with education providers can support shared goals, including reduced vehicles around the school gates.

Supporting communities with initiatives and schemes can be pivotal in an individual's travel choices. By working with both existing and new developments, we can offer more choices and create opportunities through various schemes and initiatives. This aids the use of active modes, especially schemes that assist with equipment purchase, sharing skills or support understanding of the benefits of walking, wheeling and cycling rather than using a car.

Promoting facilities allows potential users to gain a better understanding of what is available so they can make informed choices on how they travel. Priority routes, identified through the LCWIPs, alongside marketing of leisure routes (such as the Middlewood Way) create a coordinated approach to support knowledge and increase active mode journeys.

Our aim for this theme is to:

Support a culture where walking, wheeling and cycling are the natural travel choice for local journeys

Our key priorities for this theme are:

- Supporting communities and individuals with their travel choices.
- Promoting existing and new facilities and routes.
- Making safe spaces for people of all abilities to walk, wheel and cycle.

We will do this by:

- Working with social prescribers (e.g. GPs) to provide information, training and tools to influence active travel choices by those engaged with.
- Focus promotion and marketing on new developments, supporting individuals as they are creating new travel habits, i.e. as they move home.
- Promoting the integration of new and existing green spaces and recreational areas within the active travel network, to serve as attractive destinations and promote physical activity and well-being.
- Ensure new infrastructure is supported with appropriate promotional initiatives to encourage uptake of active travel.
- Support individuals with their travel choices through providing more easily accessible information and support.

- Create and develop opportunities with educational facilities, working with them to support training, for example Bikeability sessions and encourage development of School Travel Plans.
- Promote existing routes (e.g. the Middlewood Way) which offer both leisure and commuter opportunities.
- Support residents and visitors to navigate the network easily by provision of coherent and consistent information.
- Developing inspiring and impactful active travel campaigns to influence mode choice.

6. Collaborate

Travel is part of our everyday lives, providing us access to work, education and leisure. The journeys we make have an impact on wellbeing, our health, the environment, and the economy. With this in mind, it is imperative to embed travel mode choice across policy and into society.

Collaboration through policy: Future policy in the borough must ensure the inclusion of active travel, due to its physical and mental health, economic and environmental benefits. This is a pivotal time to engage and strengthen interdepartmental connections and allow a better understanding of current events, projects, and initiatives. This will support the identification of opportunities to introduce an active travel influence on projects and provide opportunities for combined resources to deliver better value for money solutions.

Community engagement: The broader community plays a key role in supporting both infrastructure and culture. Working with town and parish councils could support effective maintenance in rural areas and provide further insight into those areas that require improvements related to walking, wheeling and cycling, as well as supporting promotion and information sharing amongst residents and visitors. Schools and colleges also have the potential to provide a future generation with a more centralised focus on active travel, which will drive future behaviour and sustainable travel. Working with community groups will enable active travel measures to be introduced effectively in key locations across the borough.

Working with businesses, business groups and other local trader organisations: Commuting and business requirements produces significant levels of travel. Working with businesses to embed active travel and sustainable practices alongside corporate objectives can support an increase in the level of those walking, wheeling and cycling. Building closer relationships could support both infrastructure development, staff travel behaviours and support the delivery of wider goals and objectives. Providing information and tools to empower businesses to develop Travel Plans for their workforce and

actively monitor and update these, will support further growth opportunities and management of local travel.

Our aim for this theme is to:

Collaborate with local communities, businesses and organisations within Cheshire East Council to create a unified approach to walking, wheeling and cycling

Our key priorities for this theme are:

- Improving engagement with local communities.
- Building relationships with local businesses and stakeholders.
- Driving collaboration to deliver cross-cutting policy.

We will do this by:

- Working across departments within the Council to ensure active travel is embedded in the delivery of shared goals and is included in relevant policy development, for example the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans
- Utilise existing working groups, committees and community groups to promote infrastructure changes or support behaviour change.
- Identify opportunities to work with schools and colleges to embed the promotion of walking, wheeling and cycling and provide support in the development of School Travel Plans.
- Maintain and strengthen relationships with major employers to understand and support change for the journey to work.
- Supporting employers and community groups to facilitate the use of active modes for those travelling to them, for example through secure storage and access to shower/changing facilities.
- Encouraging the development and ownership of Travel Plans to support travel to work, education and leisure.

- Robust assessment of development planning to ensure suitable active travel infrastructure and initiatives are secured.

7. Achieving our ambition

7.1 Our commitment

We are committed to creating a culture, and the infrastructure needed, to promote walking, wheeling and cycling as the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer public transport journey.

By prioritising the maintenance of the current network and its management, we can provide a coherent network whilst identifying investment in key areas.

By supporting and promoting active travel we will build a culture that can influence individuals and communities to make informed choices about how they reach the places they need to get to.

Through building effective relationships, within the Council and externally, we can collaborate to achieve shared goals across health and wellbeing, inclusion, the economy and the environment.

7.2 Our targets

To support this strategy, we have identified the following borough-wide targets against a 2023 baseline. We understand there are geographical variations across the borough and will develop local targets to be incorporated into LCWIPs or Local Delivery Plans.

Double the number of people cycling by 2030

Increase the number of people walking regularly by 10% by 2030

Reduction in pedestrian and cyclist collisions by 5% by 2030

Increase the number of physically active adults in Cheshire East by 5% by 2030

7.3 Need for investment

Our actions and commitments will only take us so far in delivering real change. To fully deliver on our vision, external funding is a necessity. Without sufficient levels of both capital and revenue funding, delivery towards the targets set will be stifled.

We will work with partners and central government to highlight investment opportunities that will support delivery of our strategy. We have well progressed proposals to complement our strategy and enable us to act quickly when opportunities arise.

The current and developing LCWIPs will provide the priorities for infrastructure improvements and will directly align with this strategy's ambitions. Alongside infrastructure improvements, there is a clear need for complementary 'activation' funding to be present which supports the delivery of our objectives.

7.4 Monitoring and evaluation

We have set ambitious targets, which are meaningless without robust monitoring to support evaluation of our progress. We will actively monitor against these targets, whilst also seeking opportunities to further determine the growth of active travel across the borough.

To monitor against our targets, we will use available data sources, listed below, which will enable trends to be established annually.

Target	Baseline	Data
Double the percentage of people cycling by 2030	9.5% (2023, at least once per week)	DfT data sources including the Active Lives Survey ² (Table CW0302)
Increase the number of people walking regularly by 10%	43.2% (2023, at least 3 times a week)	DfT data sources including the Active Lives Survey (Table CW0303)
Reduction in pedestrian and cyclist collisions by 5% by 2030	167 casualties in 2023	DfT data sources including Police Stats19 data (Table RAS0403)
Increase the number of physically active adults in Cheshire East by 5% by 2030	70.5% (2022/23)	Public Health England Outcomes Framework

In addition to the above, and to support our understanding of areas for improvement, we will actively:

- Review, challenge and monitor the targets set in travel plans submitted to the Council.
- Utilise our Streetlight data system, to review trends in travel behaviour and patterns, where applicable, and support our understanding of where and how people are travelling. This will aid decisions for infrastructure requirements that support active modes.
- Work with our Public Health team and Care Communities to monitor social prescribing support and referrals where active travel has been supported.
- Work with major employers to support a culture change in staff travel, and to capture data on the journey to work.
- Monitor the use of new or enhanced infrastructure, to support evaluation of scheme delivery.

7.5 Progress Reporting

Each year, we will prepare an Annual Monitoring Report to assess our progress towards delivery of this Active Travel Strategy. We will collect data on outputs delivered in line with our three themes, alongside measuring progress against the overarching targets. Monitoring our delivery will also support in demonstrating alignment with emerging future strategies, both regional and national, such as the Integrated National Transport Strategy.

² The Active Lives Survey, conducted by Sport England, is an annual survey that measures activity levels in both adults and young people, through a range of criteria. The sample size of 175,000

enables comparisons across England to be established, with data being presented at a borough-wide level.

Appendix A: Access Control Barrier Policy

Background

Cheshire East Council (the Council) has responsibility for walking, wheeling and cycling routes within the highway and Public Rights of Way networks in the borough. The Council, as a landowner, also has many routes for walkers, wheelers and cyclists in its portfolio, outside of those networks, particularly linear country park routes, such as the Biddulph Valley Way and Middlewood Way which form part of the National Cycle Network.

There are access control barriers at some locations that were historically installed with the aim of limiting anti-social use by motorbikes, quad bikes etc. which can pose a risk to users, as well as causing damage to the routes themselves. It is recognised, however, that these access controls are not fully effective at limiting such usage.

Current design guidance (including [Outdoor Accessibility Guidance - Paths for All | Paths for All](#), [Cycle Infrastructure Design \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)) states that restrictive access control barriers should not be provided on traffic-free routes and that there should therefore be a general presumption against the use of access controls unless there is a persistent and significant problem of anti-social moped or motorcycle access that cannot be controlled through periodic policing.

It is also noted that a 2021 Court of Appeal judgement concluded that “*it cannot possibly be justified to prevent bicycles from taking advantage of what would otherwise be a lawful use of the track in order to inhibit the unlawful use by motorcycles*” (Garland v Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Surrey County Council).

With this in mind, the Council’s Green Infrastructure team is working with the University of Westminster on a 3-year research project using two sites in the borough; one as a trial where barriers are removed, and one as a control where barriers remain in situ. This is intended to provide academically-robust evidence as to the impact of barrier removals. It is noted that both Stockport and Manchester Councils are removing barriers at some locations, with Cheshire East Highways and the Green Infrastructure team (Public Right of Way (PROW) and Countryside Ranger Service) doing likewise in response to requests.

The Need for a Policy

The Council has a [duty under the Equality Act 2010](#) to make reasonable adjustments for people to ensure that they are not discriminated against and that everyone can access routes and destinations. The Council frequently receives requests for improved access that can include reference to the Equality Act, as barriers make access difficult or impossible for users with wheelchairs, pushchairs, trikes, cargo bikes etc.

The Council has one current known access policy, [Policy on structures on Public Rights of Way](#). In addition, minutes from the [Cabinet meeting of 9th March 2021](#) provide further guidance. There is a requirement to balance the needs of access of legitimate users with minimising risk to users from anti-social use such as by motorbikes and risks associated with off-road routes meeting the highway network where barriers are often located to indicate the transition. The Council is also mindful of the cost implications associated with removing, repositioning, or replacing access controls.

In addition, [The Local Government Association Corporate Peer Review March 2024 report](#) noted improvements that were needed to the

Council's approach to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. It identified that *“further training for both Members and Officers on the Council's requirements under the Equality Act would support the organisation in addressing these matters. This training will be an important first step, but the Council should also illustrate their organisational support for this issue through clear leadership and sponsorship of the agenda.”*

The adoption and implementation of this policy will provide a consistent approach and enable a greater understanding among all staff of accessibility issues.

Aims of Policy

Our vision for active travel in the borough is to support a culture where walking, wheeling and cycling are the preferred option for short journeys, achieved through a safe, connected and accessible network that encourages users to make healthy choices. Our vision for accessibility in Cheshire East is to provide routes that enable active travel as an option for all of Cheshire East's communities, with those using the network feeling that their individual needs are catered for. We also want our communities to know that the Council listens to their concerns.

Our new Active Travel Strategy notes that despite the obvious benefits for health, the environment and cost savings, travelling by active modes is not always the natural first choice across the borough, due to barriers such as the perceptions of safety, the availability of routes and infrastructure, confidence and the length of journey required. It is acknowledged that not all trips can be undertaken by active modes. However, we are committed to making it easier for people to choose, walking, wheeling and cycling for trips that are well suited to active modes.

This policy seeks to encourage and enable the Council's wider active travel goals by increasing access where possible and increasing consistency in service across the borough and departments. It sets out the consistent and transparent approach that the Council will use to provide access for all across the highway, PROW and wider access networks and sites to promote active travel and leisure activities as one of the Council's priorities.

The policy will:

- Ensure that the Council meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010
- Work towards ensuring that all residents and visitors are able to access routes, unhindered by unnecessary or unsuitable access controls where possible
- Define a process to assess if access controls should be removed
- Develop a prioritised programme for removal or improvement of existing access controls, subject to resources.

Roles and Responsibilities

Cheshire East Council is the Local Transport Authority for the Borough and, as such, is responsible for setting and maintaining local policies related to all modes of travel, including active travel, within the Borough.

This policy has been developed in collaboration with all of our asset management roles and landholdings, including Highways, Estates, Environment & Communities, Farms, Economic Development, Tatton Park and Green Infrastructure so as to provide a framework for decision makers and consistency for users.

Process

Access controls should be used only if there is a persistent and significant problem of unauthorised motorised vehicle usage, for example fly-tipping or anti-social behaviour, or if there is a particular safety concern.

Where access controls are deemed necessary, they should be designed to be accessible to all active travel users, including wheelers (pushchairs, wheelchairs, mobility scooters) and all types of cycles (tandems, cargo bikes, tricycles and cycles pulling child trailers). This can include bollards that provide a minimum 1.5m horizontal clearance or inclusive chicane barriers with a sufficient stagger to allow wheelchairs and larger types of cycle to safely manoeuvre through without needing to stop.

The installation or removal of access controls needs to consider new and future schemes, as well as existing provision:

- a) For new routes, the presumption should be towards no access controls being installed during the design process. During consultation, if feedback on the design suggests that such access controls may be required due to unauthorised motorised vehicle use, they will be designed to be accessible to all active travel users.
- b) On existing routes where there is no persistent and/or significant problem of unauthorised motorised vehicle access, the Council will endeavour to remove any restrictive access controls.
- c) On existing routes where there is a persistent and/or significant problem concerning unauthorised motorised vehicle access that cannot be controlled through periodic policing, the Council will seek to work with the local community, Police and other agencies

to educate and reduce the problem, while providing access control barriers that retain access for all active travel users.

In each of these different scenarios, third party private landowners may have stipulations for particular access control arrangements, including for stock control purposes, which may necessitate pieces of path furniture which are restrictive to some users.

Access controls should not be required simply to control cyclists on the approach to a road or footway crossing. It will normally be sufficient to provide signage (to support both safety and wayfinding), good sightlines and road markings so that cyclists clearly understand the need to take care and give way to pedestrians and other traffic at such points. However, it is acknowledged that sometimes road safety concerns may require a pragmatic approach, in which case non-restrictive bollards or inclusive chicane arrangements may be installed.

Policy Implementation

Scheme designers will be required to provide the rationale for any access control measures proposed.

We will also develop an inventory of access controls, dependent upon suitable funding being made available, initially focussing on leisure routes and in town centres. Criteria will be defined in consultation with council departments and relevant stakeholders to prioritise the asset register to inform an improvement programme.

The standards that will be considered and applied, wherever practicable / appropriate, are:

- [outdoor-accessibility-guidance-2023.pdf \(pathsforall.org.uk\)](#)
- [Cycle Infrastructure Design \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

- [Sustrans greenways design guide: 9. Accessibility to routes – Sustrans.org.uk](#)
- British Standard 5079:2018 for gaps, gates and stiles).

Appendix 2

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) – Summary

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) – Summary Note

This note explains the background information and summarises the Council's position on development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). This note sets out:

- What a LCWIP is;
- Why the Council are developing LCWIPs;
- What LCWIPs have been adopted to date;
- What new LCWIPs have been drafted;
- What the output of the LCWIPs is;
- Shows the draft LCWIP networks; and
- Sets out next steps.

What is a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)?

To assist local authorities in the development of LCWIPs, the DfT published guidance¹ which outlines the core elements and tasks that should be considered. The guidance provides a methodological approach to planning the delivery of walking and cycling infrastructure which can be adapted to a given local authority's context, geographic scope, and resources. The study approach used for each of the towns LCWIPs reflects the DfT guidance.

LCWIPs reflect on the current cycling and walking infrastructure provision, identify priorities for improvement, and outline strategies and implementation plans for improvements and active travel network development. The overarching objectives of an LCWIP are to promote active travel through the creation of safe, accessible, and sustainable infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. Fundamentally, an LCWIP is a strategic transport planning document developed as a tool for network planning, securing funding and collaborating with a range of stakeholders.

The core aim of an LCWIP is to facilitate and encourage active travel journeys to be taken. The specific aims and objectives for the LCWIPs include:

- Encourage active travel such as walking and cycling, reducing dependency on private vehicles;
- Create safe and accessible infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Promote sustainability, health, and quality of life in communities;
- Enhance connectivity, accessibility, and mobility within the community;
- Reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emissions;
- Foster economic development and tourism; and
- Promote community involvement and engagement in the planning process.

The main output of the LCWIPs is a network plan for walking and cycling for each town, identifying key walking and cycling connections and routes.

¹ [Local cycling and walking infrastructure plans technical guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/671111/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plans-technical-guidance.pdf)

Why are Cheshire East Council developing LCWIPs?

Local authorities were first encouraged to begin developing LCWIPs following the publication of the Department for Transport's (DfT) Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS). Whilst the preparation of LCWIPs is not mandatory, local authorities which develop LCWIPs are better placed to make the case for future investment. Therefore, Cheshire East Council (CEC) have been working to deliver a prioritised list of walking and cycling routes across Cheshire East capable of attracting central government support and funding.

Importantly, Active Travel England (ATE) expect local authorities to complete an active travel capability self-assessment each year, which is then assessed by ATE to assign a level to which a local authority is performing, ranging from levels 0 (lowest) to level 4 (highest). Cheshire East is currently classified as level 1 and there is ambition and commitment to progress through the levels. Those authorities performing at a higher level have greater access to funding. Developing infrastructure plans is a key part of demonstrating our ambition and commitment, with clear recognition that increasing levels of active travel supports the delivery of wider strategic priorities, particularly health improvement and local action to tackle the climate change emergency.

Which LCWIPs are already adopted?

Cheshire East Council has published LCWIPs for all population centres over 20,000. This includes the towns of:

- Crewe;
- Macclesfield;
- Congleton; and
- Wilmslow.

These four areas were selected following an evidence-based review, which identified them as having the highest potential in the borough to increase walking and cycling. The LCWIPs for these areas can be found online at the [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday 9th March, 2021](#), item 97².

What towns have we drafted new LCWIPs for?

In addition to the above, in 2024, LCWIPs have been drafted for the following towns:

- Alsager;
- Handforth;
- Knutsford;
- Middlewich;
- Nantwich;
- Poynton; and
- Sandbach.

² [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 9th March, 2021, 1.00 pm | Cheshire East Council](#)

What is the output of the LCWIPs?

The LCWIPs include a prioritised list of walking routes and cycling routes for each town that can attract central government support and funding. Approximately three walking routes and a Core Walking Zone, and three cycling routes per town have been included in the proposed networks, following an evidence-based process.

What are the draft networks for the draft LCWIPs?

To support the creation of a network plan for walking and cycling, baseline data has been analysed through a review of local policy documents and background data, forming a robust evidence base. The future walking and cycling network plans have been developed by identifying links between areas designated as trip origins and destinations. As part of this process, corridors have been identified, incorporating the routes most frequently used by pedestrians and cyclists to access specific destinations. By creating a network plan of routes, the LCWIPs highlight the core routes for future investment. Meetings with local representatives, with valuable knowledge and understanding, were held to inform the routes created for each LCWIP during the technical process.

The draft walking and cycling network plans for each of the seven LCWIPs are available in Annex A. To identify areas needing improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure and determine the most suitable interventions, routes were audited using appropriate guidance. Audits were conducted using local knowledge, site visits to each route, and online research.

Suggested interventions for walking and cycling have been identified along each route with the vision to create a high-quality network. All schemes identified in LCWIPs will be subject to further detailed development and design work, with extensive public consultation necessary before schemes are implemented.

What are the next steps?

A report will be taken to Highways and Transport committee in June 2025 for approval to consult on the proposed walking and cycling route networks, which will occur over the summer. Following the consultation, where appropriate, routes will be refined and adjusted based on feedback before being formally adopted in due course.

Delivery of the LCWIP routes is not funded at this stage. They establish a plan for improvements that can help in securing future funding from a wide range of sources. As opportunities arise, bids for external funding will be prepared and where funding is secured, detailed scheme designs will be developed.

Annex A

Figure 1 to Figure 14 on of the pages below outline the walking and cycling routes for each LCWIP that has been drafted. Each town includes 1 x walking network plan and 1 x cycling network plan. The table below outlines the number of walking and cycling routes in each network plan.

Town	Number of walking routes	Number of cycling routes	Number of combined walking and cycling routes
Alsager	3	3	
Handforth	2	2	1
Knutsford	3	4	
Middlewich	3	3	
Nantwich	3	3	
Poynton	3	4	
Sandbach	2	3	1

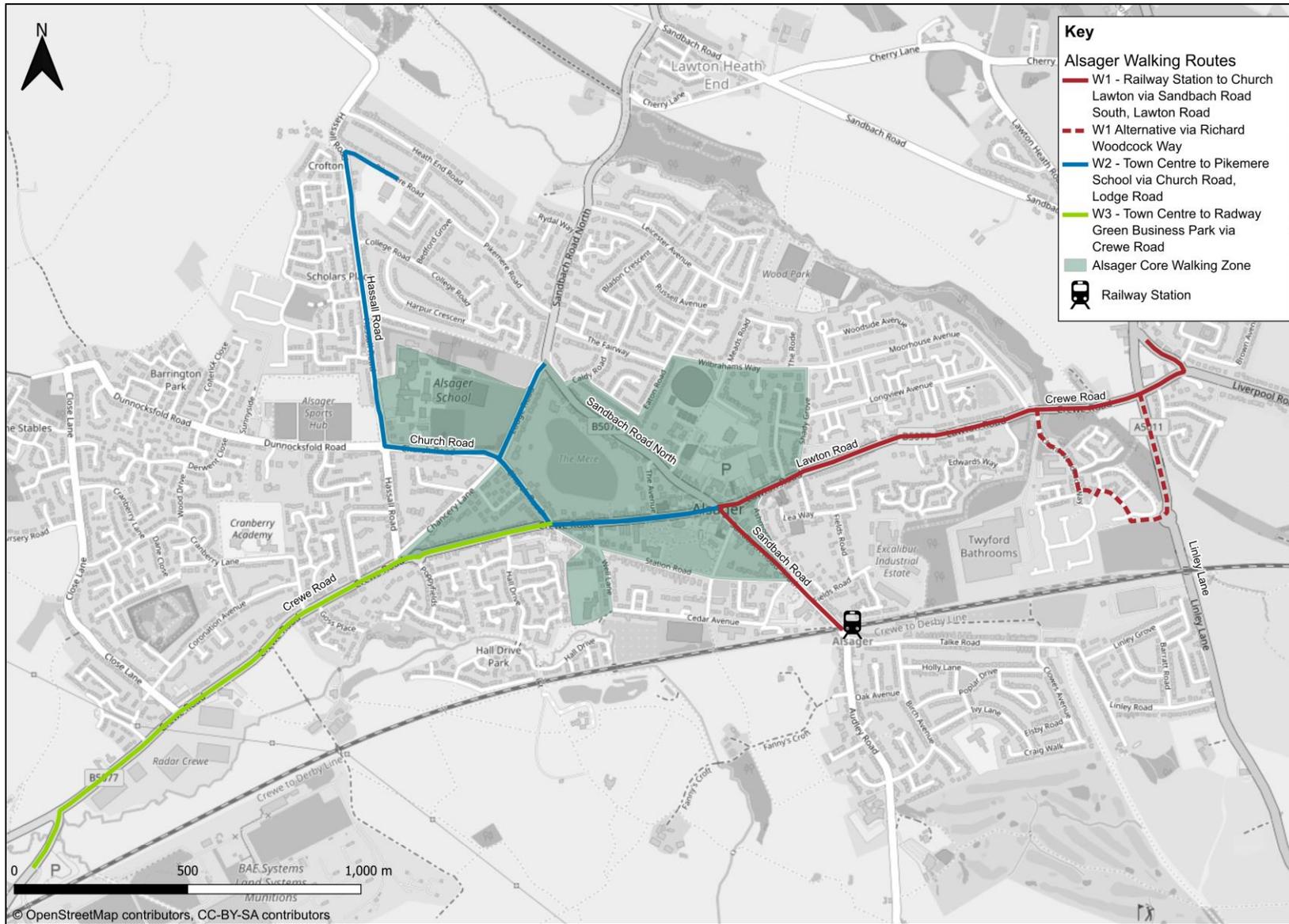


Figure 1 Alsager Walking LCWIP Routes

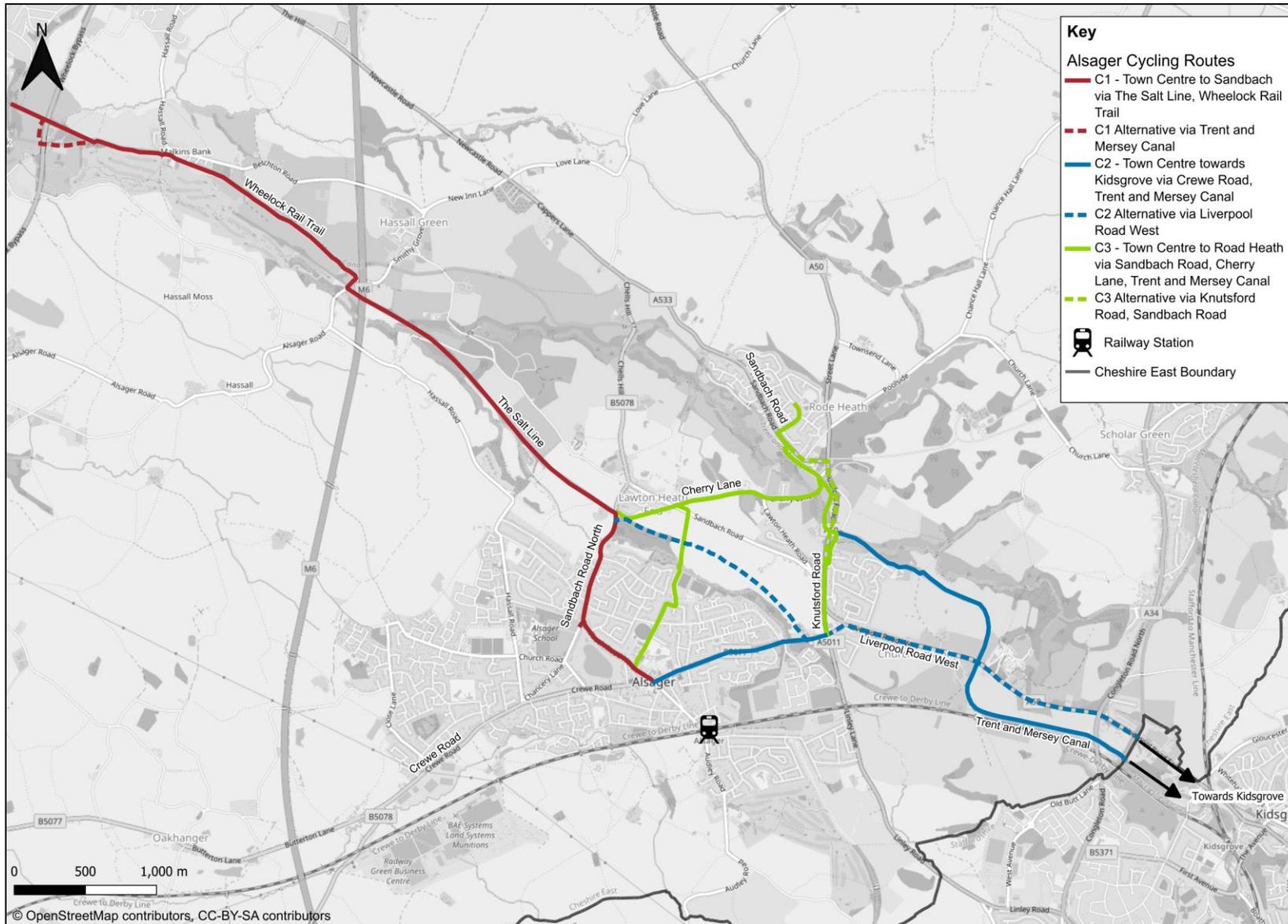


Figure 2 Alsager Cycling LCWIP Route

OFFICIAL

Handforth

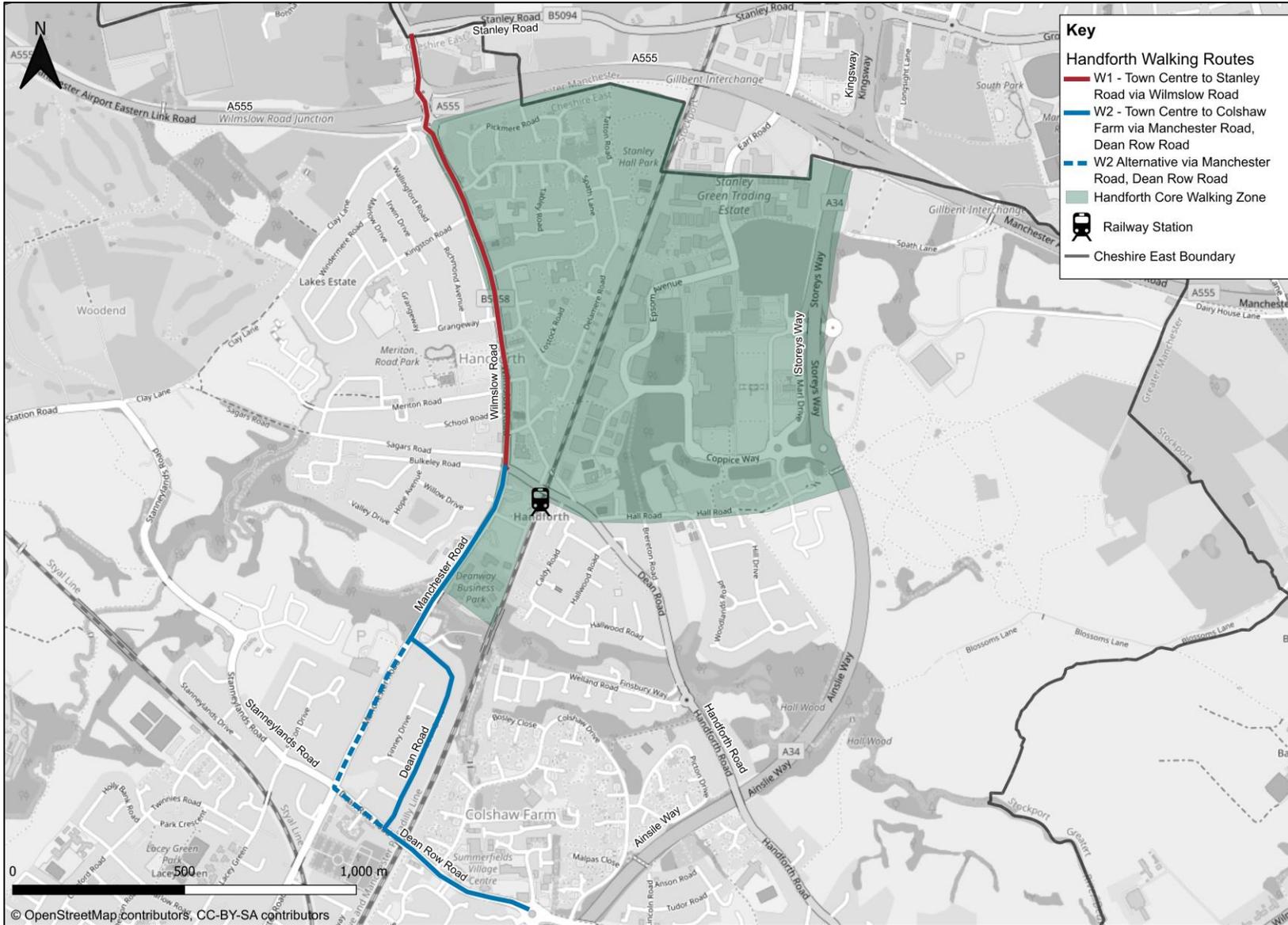


Figure 3 Handforth Walking LCWIP Routes

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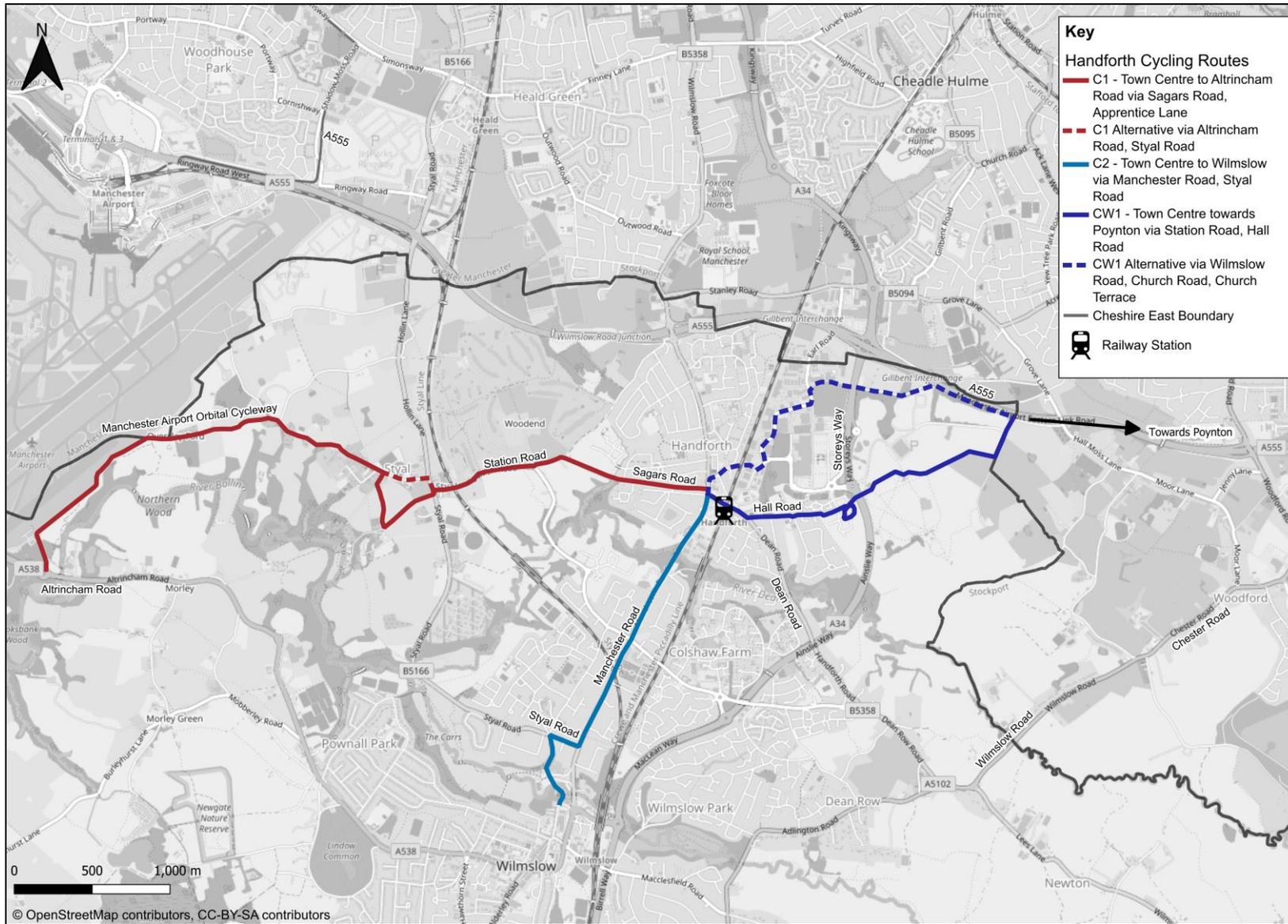


Figure 4 Handforth Cycling LCWIP Routes

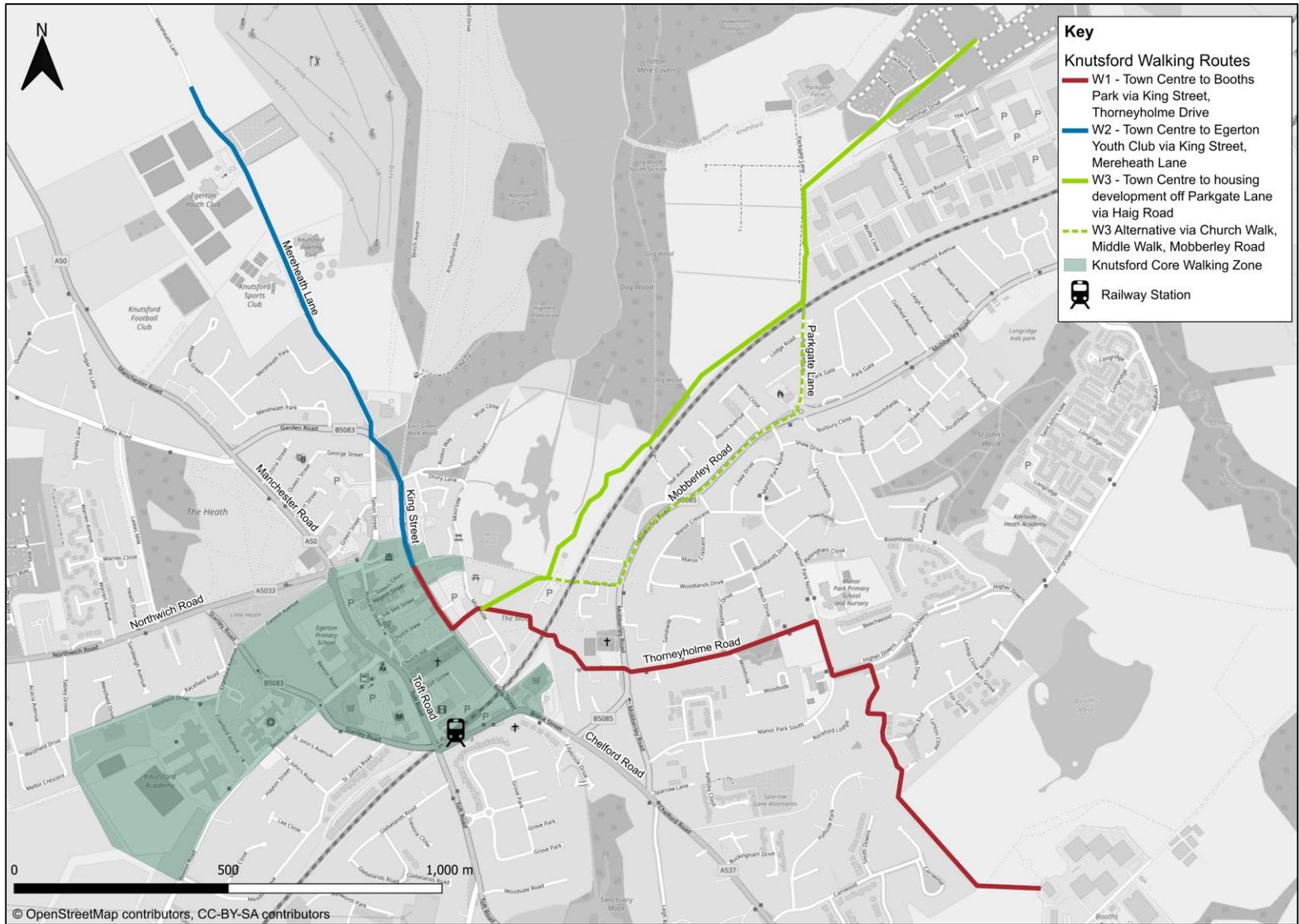


Figure 5 Knutsford Walking LCWIP Routes

Knutsford

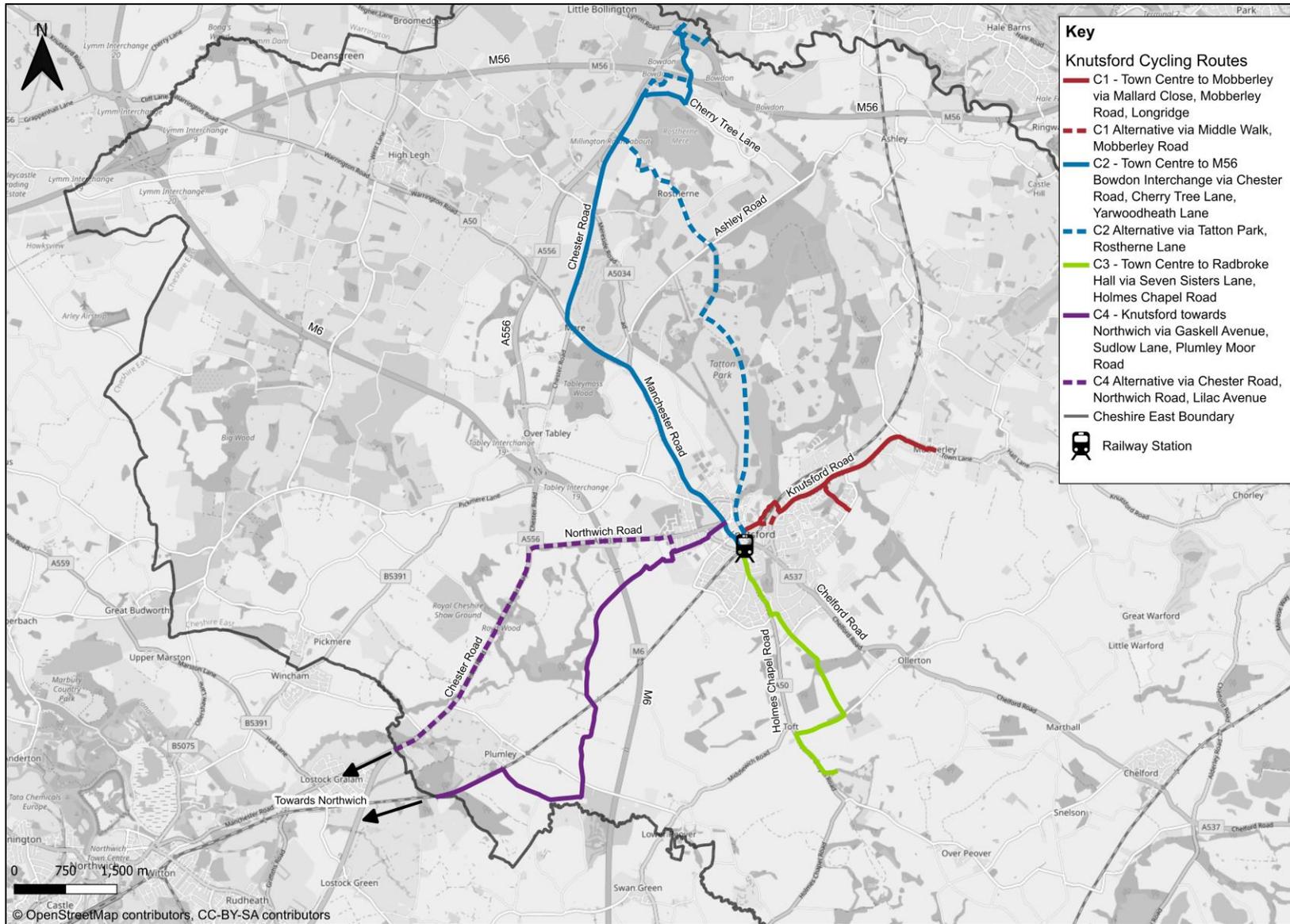


Figure 6 Knutsford Cycling LCWIP Routes

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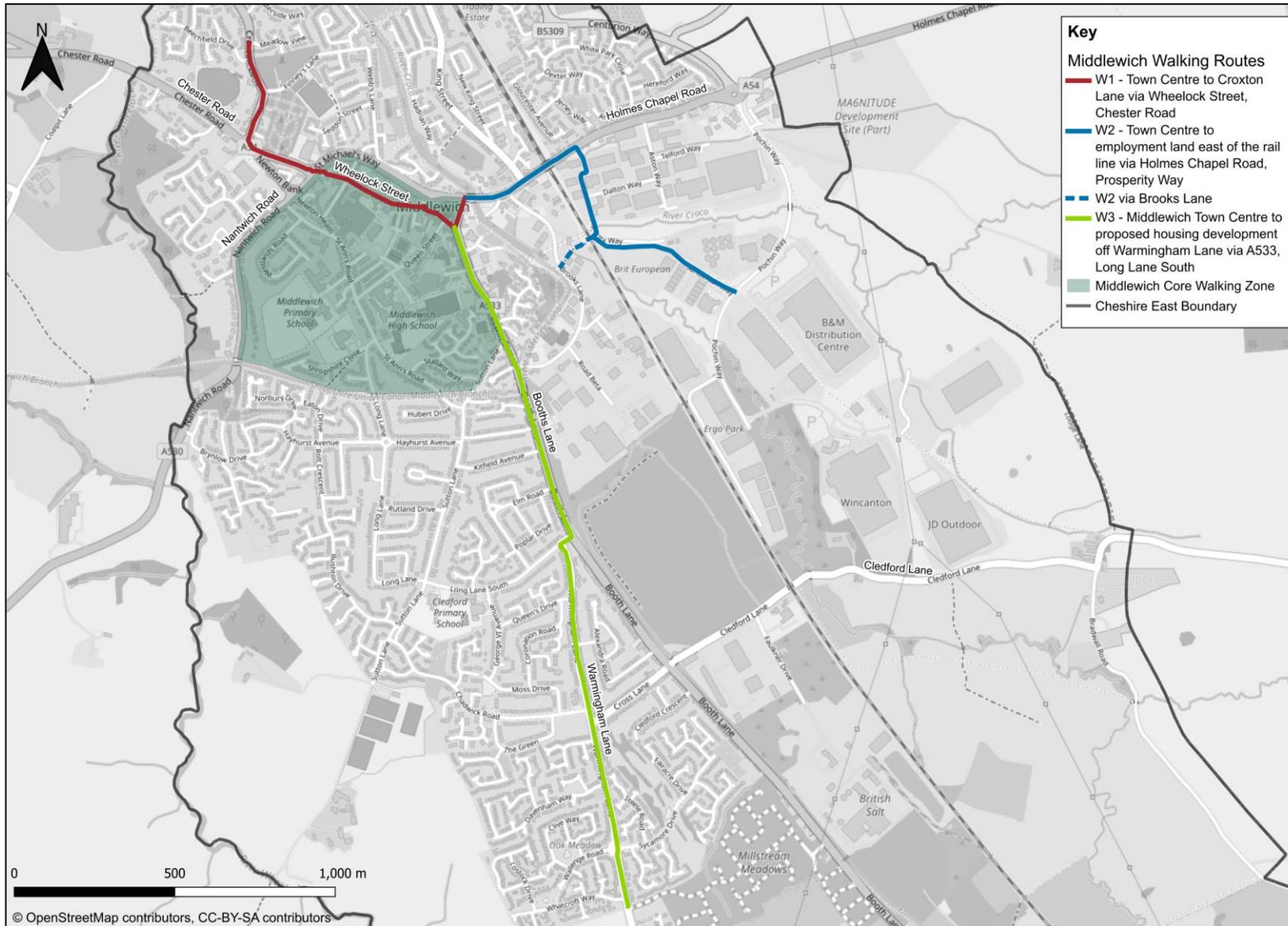


Figure 7 Middlewich Walking LCWIP Routes

Middlewich

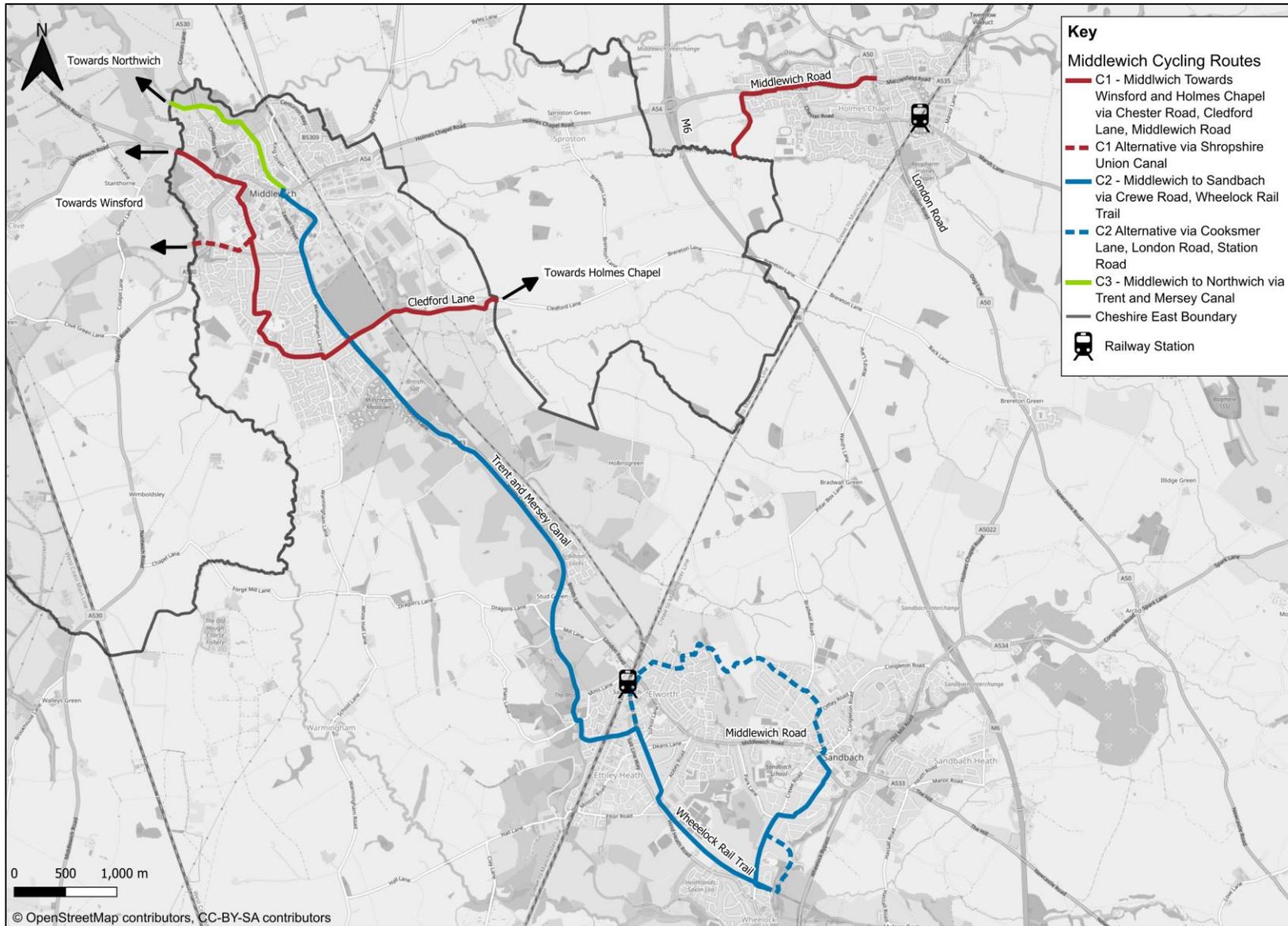


Figure 8 Middlewich Cycling LCWIP Routes

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Nantwich

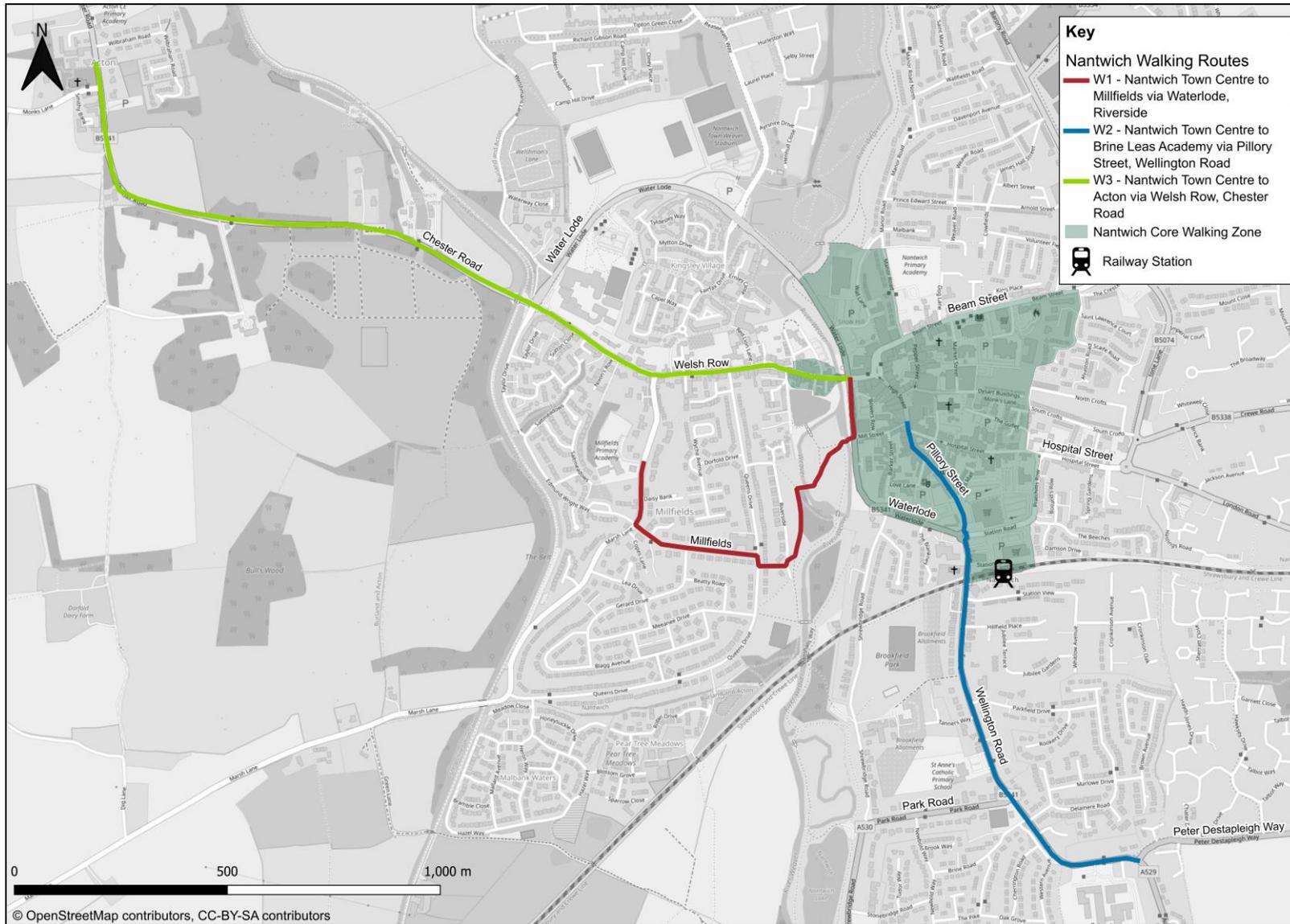


Figure 9 Nantwich Walking LCWIP Route

OFFICIAL

Nantwich

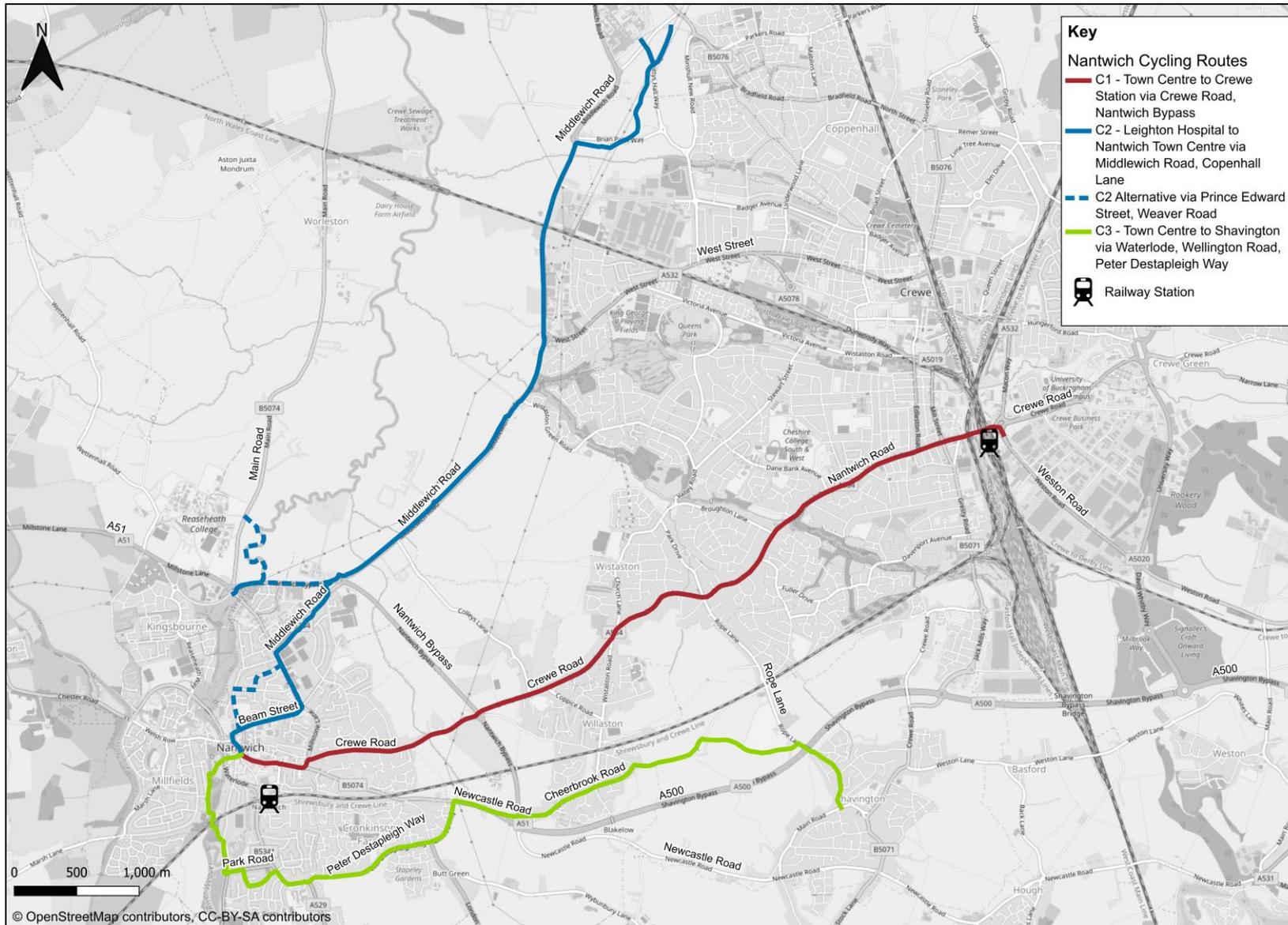


Figure 10 Nantwich Cycling LCWIP Routes

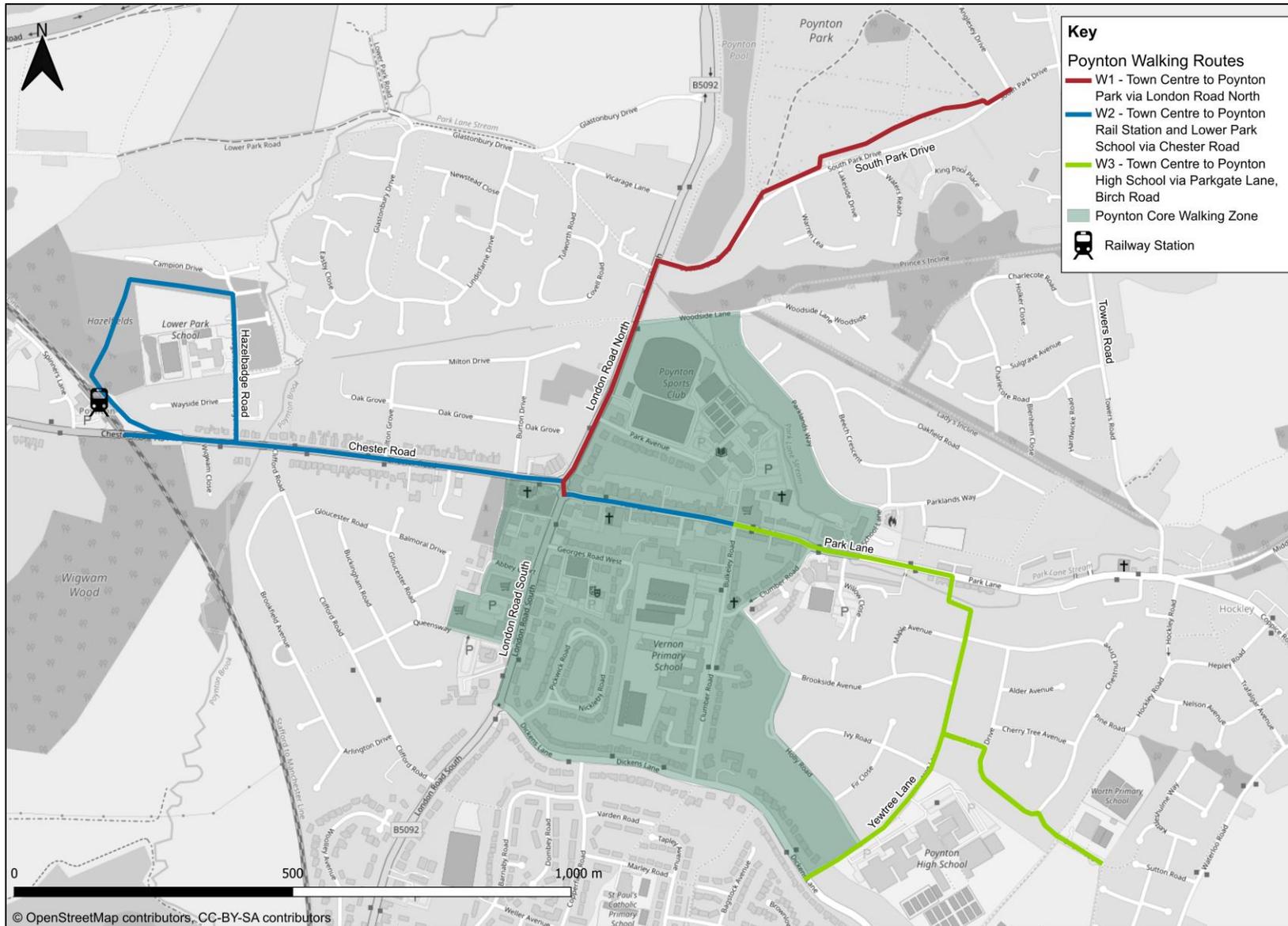


Figure 11 Poynton Walking LCWIP Routes

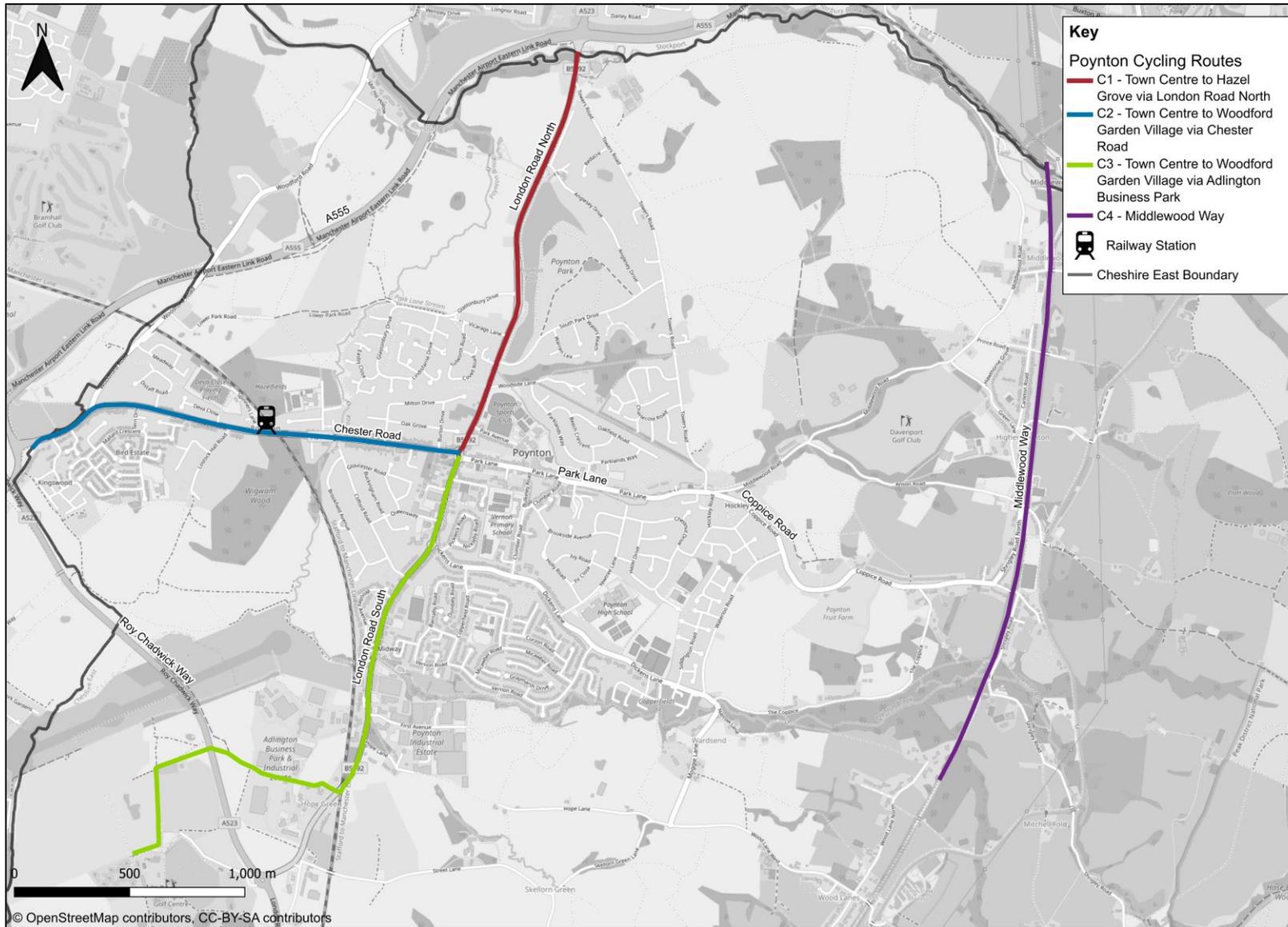


Figure 12 Poynton Cycling LCWIP Routes

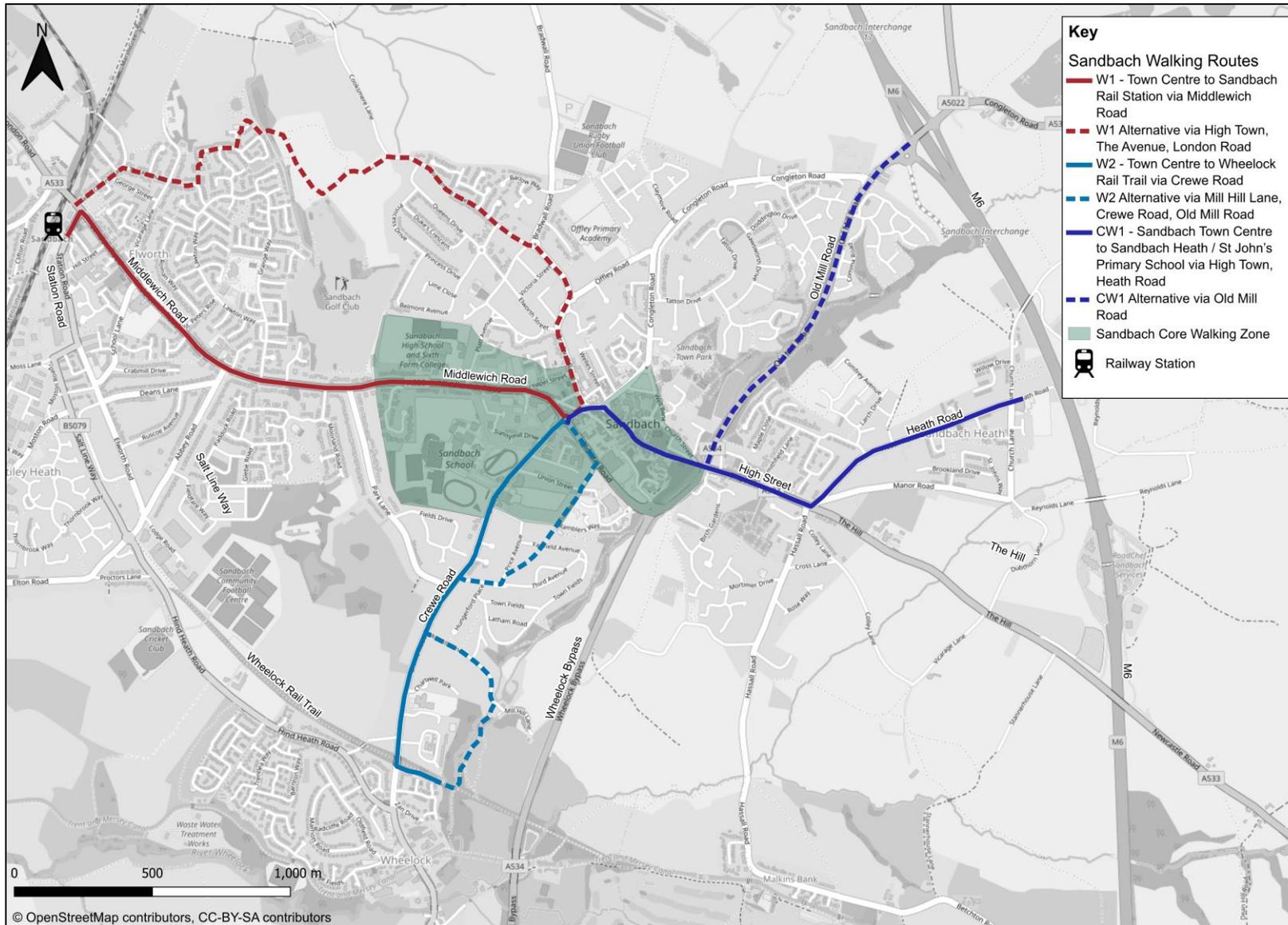


Figure 13 Sandbach Walking LCWIP Routes

Sandbach

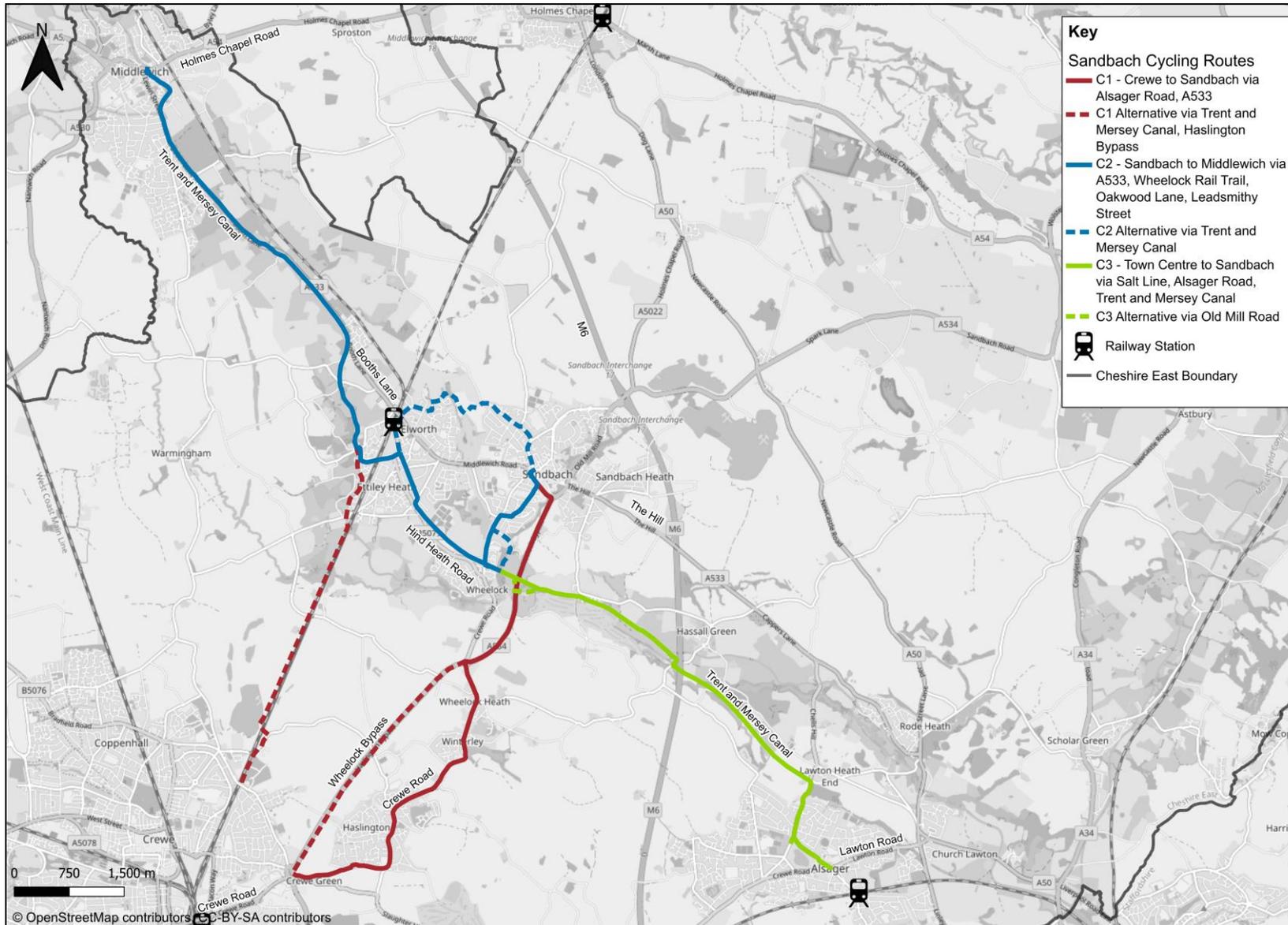


Figure 14 Sandbach Cycling LCWIP Route

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Consultation and Engagement Plan

Name of engagement / consultation activity:	Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) – Public Consultation
Senior Responsible Officer (SRO):	Richard Hibbert
Project Manager (PM) (if part of a project):	Jenny Marston
Other Project Team members and roles (if part of a project):	Laura Prendeville Hannah Webster
Service / team:	Strategic Transport

The outcome of this Consultation and Engagement will report to:	
Name	Role
Jenny Marston	Transport Policy and Strategy Manager

Version control:			
Version	Author	Date	Description
v1	Hannah Webster / Laura Prendeville	03.04.25	Consultation, Engagement and Communications Plan for the Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs.
V2	Hannah Webster / Laura Prendeville	08.04.25	Address comments

Consultation and Engagement purpose and background: An explanation of the issues and the purpose of the project, key information to set the scene.

The existing Cycling Strategy 2017-2027 was prepared pre-pandemic, and prior to many policy changes and new guidance which has emerged, including: Gear Change (2020), the Transport Decarbonisation Plan (2021) and Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2 (2022), as well as new cycle infrastructure design guidance.

The Cycling Strategy focused on a single mode only, without consideration of the interfaces with walking and wheeling, which have subsequently been emphasised in national policy. The government considers 'active modes' (walking, wheeling and cycling) holistically. This direction can be seen in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy and the expectation for local authorities to develop Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).

Central Government has an objective for 50% of all local journeys in towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030. Importantly, Active Travel England (ATE) expect local authorities to complete an active travel capability self-assessment each year, which is then assessed by ATE to assign a level to which a local authority is performing, ranging from levels 0 (lowest) to level 4 (highest). Cheshire East is currently classified as level 1 and there is ambition and commitment to progress through the levels. Those authorities performing at a higher level have greater access to funding.

An Active Travel Strategy for Cheshire East has been drafted to share our vision and actions. Alongside this, a suite of seven new Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) have been

developed, setting out an evidence-based prioritised network of walking and cycling routes, following guidance set out by the Department for Transport.

The primary purpose of the consultation, subject to approval by Committee, is to seek the views of stakeholders and residents on the extent to which the public agree with the Active Travel Strategy and actions provided, as well as the extent to which the public agree with the proposed networks, interventions and prioritisation presented in the LCWIPs. Following the consultation, the feedback will be considered and the Active Travel Strategy and LCWIP plans will be updated and presented to Committee for approval.

Strategic Objectives: What the key strategic objectives of the project are, and how these relates to the corporate plan.

The desired outcomes of the consultation on the Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs are to inform the public and stakeholders of the plans for a new strategy and suite of LCWIPs and to obtain a representative picture of local views on the actions outlined in the strategy, and interventions and prioritised network outlined in the LCWIPs.

The objectives of the consultation are to:

- Understand whether the public and stakeholders agree with the challenges and opportunities set out within the Active Travel Strategy;
- Understand the extent to which the public and stakeholders agree with the vision and themes (create, culture and collaborate) set out in the Active Travel Strategy;
- Understand the extent to which the public and stakeholders agree with the way the key priorities will be achieved as set out in the Active Travel Strategy;
- Understand the extent to which the public and stakeholders agree with targets set out in the Active Travel Strategy;
- Understand the extent to which the public and stakeholders agree with the proposed network of walking and cycling routes in the LCWIPs; and
- Understand the extent to which the public and stakeholders agree with the prioritisation of the proposed network of walking and cycling routes proposed in the LCWIPs.

Stakeholders and methods: A summary of the people and groups you want to engage / consult with from your stakeholder analysis including impacted groups from your equality impact assessment. The methods you will use to gather information, based on the best ways to target your key audiences, or impacted groups.

Stakeholder	Method	What stage
Head of Highways Head of Strategic Transport & Parking	Briefings/meetings	Pre-Consultation Stage
Chair of H&T Committee Vice Chair of H&T Committee	Briefing	Pre-Consultation Stage
Walking and Cycling Champion	Email/briefing	Pre-Consultation Stage Consultation Stage Post-Consultation
All CEC Members	Members Briefing	Pre-Consultation Stage

Stakeholder	Method	What stage
		Consultation Stage Post-Consultation
MPs	Email	Consultation Stage
Neighbouring Local Authorities & Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington	Meetings/email	Pre-Consultation Stage Consultation Stage
Town & Parish Councils	Email	Consultation Stage
CE residents	Online survey and paper copies at Libraries	Consultation stage
Statutory transport bodies (Active Travel England)	Email	Consultation Stage
Specialists e.g. Sustrans, Canal and River Trust	Email	Consultation Stage
Manchester Airport Group	Email	Consultation Stage
Community and volunteer groups e.g. cycling groups	Email	Consultation Stage
Schools and educational establishments, young people	Email	Consultation Stage
Healthcare	Email	Consultation Stage
Businesses and chamber of commerce	Email	Consultation Stage
Environmental groups e.g. Natural England	Email	Consultation Stage
Equality Groups / vulnerable groups – e.g. older people, those with a disability, deprived areas, younger people as identified in the EqIA	Email	Consultation Stage
Partner organisations including Cheshire Police and emergency services	Email	Consultation Stage
Media	Email	Consultation Stage

A full stakeholder mapping exercise will be conducted ahead of consultation to identify the stakeholders to engage and appropriate communication methods. This will be done through engaging a range of relevant Council service teams to collate best practice and details of known stakeholders.

Activity plan: The time to take for each stage including preparation, live engagement / consultation, analysis phase and feedback phase.

Activity	Who / team responsible	Estimated date / timescales
Commission work to develop materials for consultation	Strategic Transport	May/June 2025
Progress work to prepare for consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liase with comms to promote consultation • Full stakeholder list and contact details • Prepare detailed consultation plan • Draft and finalise consultation materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Questionnaire ○ Brochure summarising the Active Travel Strategy and LCWIP networks and prioritisation in a public friendly format ○ Web page text ○ Emails ○ Poster ○ Press releases prior to and during consultation ○ Social media posts • Prepare for and undertake relevant briefings • Organise meetings with cycle groups and reps for each of the town LCWIPs. 	Strategic Transport	June 2025
Conduct consultation (6 weeks)	Consultation Team	July-August 2025
Analysis and feedback	Consultation Team	Autumn 2025

Analysis, Reporting and feedback: How will analysis be carried out / how will the draft feedback be reported and shared with participants.

Analysis tools and expertise required:	Strategic Transport Team, Research & Consultation Team to lead analysis of text and questionnaire via online tools or alternative means such as paper surveys, emails, letters and or comments left through the customer contact centre.
Reporting required:	A report detailing the outcomes of consultation and community feedback.
Public feedback methods:	Full reporting of consultation findings will be published.

Risk Assessment: What are the anticipated risks and mitigations?

Risk	Mitigation
Public not understanding the purpose of the consultation / inability to interpret	Use of plain English
Wording/jargon is too technical	Use of plain English
Consultation material too lengthy	Keep consultation questions short and concise and in plain English.
Not getting consultation started in Autumn 2025.	Weekly project plan, key milestones identified with sufficient lead in time built in, working collaboratively to hit each tasks deadline.
Limited responses to the consultation	Communications and promotions to encourage responses. Ensure consultation material is engaging. The questionnaire will be available online and a paper version on request.
Unpresented sample/results	Reach out to broadest possible range of age groups, demographics and partners.
Various transport themed consultations running concurrently	Ensure various consultations are linked together through coordinated communications and ensure staff can answer questions regarding other consultations. Ensure that those who manage the Cheshire East helpline number and email address have approved lines to take on this consultation and others in the area.

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Comms238 – Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

Contents

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Classification, resources and timescale

Service	Strategic Transport		Committee	Highways and Transport	
Corporate Plan Priority	Green – A great place for people to live, work and visit		Communications Strategy for Residents Priority	Promote corporate plan projects, programmes and priorities	
Subject	Planning transformation				
Comms lead	Chris Gibbs		Type	Strategic programme	
Budget	tbc		Bloom	n/a	
Start	Spring/Summer 2025	Go-live	Summer 2025	End:	Autumn 2025

Background/narrative

The existing Cycling Strategy 2017-2027 was prepared pre-pandemic, and prior to many policy changes and new guidance which has emerged, including: Gear Change (2020), the Transport Decarbonisation Plan (2021) and Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2 (2022), as well as new cycle infrastructure design guidance.

The Cycling Strategy focused on a single mode only, without consideration of the interfaces with walking and wheeling, which have subsequently been emphasised in national policy. The government considers 'active modes' (walking, wheeling and cycling) holistically. This direction can be seen in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy and the expectation for local authorities to develop Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).



Central government has an objective for 50% of all local journeys in towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030. Importantly, Active Travel England (ATE) expect local authorities to complete an active travel capability self-assessment each year, which is then assessed by ATE to assign a level to which a local authority is performing, ranging from levels 0 (lowest) to level 4 (highest). Cheshire East is currently classified as level 1 and there is ambition and commitment to progress through the levels. Those authorities performing at a higher level have greater access to funding.

An Active Travel Strategy for Cheshire East has been drafted to share our vision and actions. Alongside this, a suite of seven new Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) have been developed, setting out an evidence-based prioritised network of walking and cycling routes, following guidance set out by the Department for Transport.

The primary purpose of the consultation, subject to approval by Highways and Transport Committee, is to seek the views of stakeholders and residents on the extent to which the public agree with the Active Travel Strategy and actions provided, as well as the extent to which the public agree with the proposed network interventions and prioritisation presented in the LCWIPs. Following the consultation, the feedback will be considered and the Active Travel Strategy and LCWIP plans will be updated and presented to committee for approval.

Key contacts

- Transport Policy and Accessibility Manager (Cheshire East) – Jenny Marston
- Head of service Strategic Transport and Parking (Cheshire East) – Richard Hibbert
- Director of Transport and Infrastructure (Cheshire East) – Tom Moody
- Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Co-ordinator – TBC
- Principal Transport Planner (Cheshire East) – Matt Nevin / Clair Visco
- Research Officer (Cheshire East) – Tracy Betty
- Communications Officer (Cheshire East) – Chris Gibbs

Communications objectives/outcomes

Communications activity tries to change what people:		
Know	➔	Provide or clarify information and/or correct misinformation, misconception – in ways that are accessible and easy to understand
Think	➔	Put information into context of other knowledge and values, helping people reflect on what information means to them
Feel	➔	Nudge emotional response and personal relationship to knowledge
Do	➔	Provoke or call to action

Communications-specific outcomes and objectives for this plan

- To encourage engagement with the consultation through supporting a better understanding of the key themes of the project
- Set the context for why an Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs have been progressed – doing this effectively will then lead to increased engagement with the proposed plan.
- Get people talking about the Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs at the earliest possible stage – getting members on board as ambassadors can help with this process.



Audiences and stakeholders

Communications activity can take people on an engagement journey:

Unaware >>>> Aware >>>>> Informed >>> Interested >>> Involved >>> Leadership

We must consider people's starting attitude and position in relation what we are doing:

Advocate Agnostic Sceptical Critical Cynical

Edit/add new rows as the project requires

Audience/ stakeholder	Notes
Residents and visitors	Everyone at some point is impacted at least by walking as part of a longer trip. The active travel network interacts with all our lives, so there is a captive audience to appeal to.
Customers	We have customers who are already using the active travel network who will understand the importance of a well-planned and thought-out active travel network and want to share their everyday experiences.
Children and young people	This group is important to engage with as they often rely on walking, wheeling and cycling, and this group are key to making travel choices to continue into adulthood.
Parents and carers	Notify via schools' newsletter and contacting specialist groups.
CEC Staff	As per 'residents and visitors' above.
Councillor Chris Hilliard – walking and cycling member champion	As Cheshire East Council's walking and cycling member champion, Chris is an excellent ambassador for increasing engagement of the consultation.
Councillor Mark Goldsmith and Councillor Liz Braithwaite	As chair and vice chair of the highways and transport committee they are both key stakeholders – they can help to champion the consultation to their committee and may also be able to share details through their own channels.
Highways and transport committee	All committee members will be invested in a positive and thriving active travel network.
All CEC ward councillors/members	Cheshire East Council ward members can act as advocates for both the plan and the consultation.
Town and parish councillors	They can be key stakeholders. The consultation for the active travel strategy impacts on every town and village in Cheshire East and the LCWIPs are targeted for seven key service centres.
Town and parish councils	Town and parish councils themselves can also be strong advocates by helping to publish information at a hyperlocal level.
Businesses (local, regional and national)	Businesses across the borough have an interest in attracting and retaining talent and the efficient movement of goods to support their business. Transport supports business growth.
Schools, colleges, early years providers	Providing a safe active travel network is of particular importance to schools. Being able to access active travel links to education remains a very important aspect of daily life.
MPs	All MPs operating in Cheshire East will be monitoring engagement with the consultation closely. It might be possible for MPs to promote the consultation through their own channels.
Neighbouring Authorities	Could also be advocates especially in towns and villages sharing a border with Cheshire East.

Audience/ stakeholder	Notes
Those with protected characteristics / organisations for people with specialist transport needs (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation)	It is important to gain feedback and input from those with protected characteristics to understand their views in relation to the Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs and update the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA).
Cycle reps and groups	It is important to gain feedback and input from those with an interest in cycling.

Tactics/approach

How we are going to achieve the communications objectives/outcomes

- Issue press releases, promoted also via social media to outline why there is a new Active Travel Strategy and new LCWIPs, and what the next steps will be.
- Press releases/social media must generate interest in the topic to encourage participation in the public consultation.
- Briefings to key stakeholders in advance of consultation going live and during the first week of consultation.
- Questionnaire.
- Webpage.
- Brochure.
- Engagement with key stakeholders.

Products/types of activity

Examples of what we are going to do

- Press releases prior to and during the public consultation to encourage uptake.
- Social media posts to encourage participation in the public consultation.
- Questionnaire.
- Webpage information and link to questionnaire.
- Contact stakeholder list which should include umbrella organisations for those with specialist transport needs and transport interest groups.
- Briefings with other key stakeholders enabling them through various different channels such as newsletters and member briefings.

Key messages

The key messages and lines to take

- To support an ambition to increase active travel uptake, we must actively develop plans and deliver infrastructure that supports this. This includes improving active travel routes to improve connectivity



across the local authority. The Active Travel Strategy outlines the role walking, wheeling and cycling will play in delivering a transport network that promotes active travel.

- Opportunity for residents to input on the draft vision and themes of the Active Travel Strategy and the extent to which there is support of the LCWIP routes in the towns of:
 - Alsager
 - Handforth
 - Knutsford
 - Nantwich
 - Middlewich
 - Poynton
 - Sandbach

- Following consultation, it is envisaged amendments will be made where appropriate and documents will follow the approval process for adoption.
- The LCWIPs are not funded through to delivery, and therefore the Active Travel Strategy and the LCWIPs will form the basis for future funding bids, when opportunities arise.

Action plan and timeline

#	Date	Time	Activity/Event	Comms lead	Audience(s)	Channel	Service	Ctte	Subject	Notes
1	Early June	tbc	Director/exec director to brief leader/deputy leader on plans	tbc	Political leadership	Call/email	Transport	H+T	Awareness of campaign	Project team to establish who will do this briefing
2	Early June	tbc	Director/exec director to brief committee chair and vice chair	tbc	Key committee members	Call/email	Transport	H+T	Awareness of campaign	Project team to establish who will do this briefing
3	19 June 2025	tbc	Highways and Transport Committee	JM/PG	Committee members	Highways and Transport Committee	Transport	H+T	Committee paper	
4	20-25 June	tbc	Wider Councillor briefings	tbc	Appropriate councillors	Call/email	Transport	H+T	Information on consultation material	Preferable date for this wider briefing would be Friday 20 June as that will allow some space before the following week for a further update to be included in a members briefing
5	26 June	tbc	Members' briefing	CG	CEC councillors	Members' briefing	Transport	H+T	Information on consultation material	This is an email which is issued fortnightly
6	May	tbc	Commission support for consultation	JM/PG	n/a	n/a	Transport	H+T	n/a	
7	Late May / early June	tbc	Draft all consultation materials	tbc	Project team	Materials	Transport	H+T	Developing the campaign	Brochure, questionnaire, web page text, poster, press release, social media posts
8	Mid/late June	tbc	Comments back on materials and finalisation	tbc	Project team	Physical materials	Transport	H+T	Developing the campaign	May need to organise a meeting around this time to feedback any comments in a timely manner
9	Late June	tbc	Commit all assets to print	tbc	Project team	Physical assets	Transport	H+T	Campaign launch	Assets to be delivered to Delamere House, Crewe unless otherwise stated
10	Early July	tbc	Press release to promote consultation start date	tbc	General public	Media	Transport	H+T	What the consultation is about and how to participate	
11	Early July	tbc	Social media post regarding public consultation start date	tbc	General public	Social Media platforms	Transport	H+T	What the consultation is about and how to participate	Naturally we will put out a social media post when the consultation goes live but we also need reminder posts once this has happened.
12	Early July	tbc	Online publication regarding public consultation start date	tbc	General public	Online (council webpage)	Transport	H+T	What the consultation is about and how to participate	Council website to be the primary source for providing this information.
13	Start of July	tbc	Public consultation has launched	tbc	General public	Physical assets / online	Transport	H+T	Campaign Launch	Assets to be distributed from Crewe to locations across Cheshire East prior launch of the consultation
14	Start of July	tbc	Social media posts to announce launch of consultation	tbc	General public	Social media platforms	Transport	H&T	Reminder that the consultation is open	This is complementing the messages that already exist with all the physical assets
15	Late July	tbc	Social media posts at half way stage to further encourage participation	tbc	General public	Social media platforms	Transport	H&T	Reminder that the consultation is open	
16	August	tbc	Public consultation has closed	tbc	General public	Online	Transport	H+T	Outline next steps	All responses will now be reviewed is the type of language that will be used
17	September	tbc	CEC-prepared report summarising consultation feedback and analysis	tbc	General public	Internal	Transport	H+T	Outcomes and next steps	
18	tbc	tbc	Media release/social media to promote outcome of the consultation	tbc	General public and stakeholders	Website, media release & social media	Transport	H+T	Outcomes and next steps	

Evaluation, performance, reporting

How are we going to demonstrate how well we have delivered the communications objectives and outcomes?

- Number of detailed email responses received (where respondents have added information that they felt they were unable to include within the survey).
- Report on media pickup indicating what audiences are being reached (this will be measured through media monitoring within the communications team).
- Number of visits to the scheme web page and the number of people linking through to the Smart Survey following on from that initial visit - any opening of the survey will contribute towards engagement figures (partial completion of the surveys is an example of this).

Appendix 1: Communications products

Record/link to final versions of media releases, statements and other products.

TBC

Appendix 2: Notable coverage

List press, online, broadcast and social coverage.

TBC

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Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and our equality duty

The Equality Duty helps public bodies to deliver their overall objectives for public services, and as such should be approached as a positive opportunity to support good decision-making.

It encourages public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs. By understanding the effect of their activities on different people, and how inclusive public services can support and open up people's opportunities, public bodies are better placed to deliver policies and services that are efficient and effective.

Complying with the Equality Duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. For example, it may involve providing a service in a way which is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic, such as providing computer training to all people to help them access information and services.

Whilst [the Gunning Principles](#) set out the rules for consulting with 'everyone', additional requirements are in place to avoid discrimination and inequality.

Cheshire East Council is required to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Act 2010 simplified previous anti-discrimination laws with a single piece of legislation. Within the Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149) has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, by consciously thinking about equality when making decisions (such as in developing policy, delivering services and commissioning from others)
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, by removing disadvantages, meeting their specific needs, and encouraging their participation in public life
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not

The Equality Act identifies nine 'protected characteristics' and makes it a legal requirement to make sure that people with these characteristics are protected from discrimination:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Applying the equality duty to engagement

If you are developing a new policy, strategy or programme you may need to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. You may be able to ascertain the impact of your proposal on different characteristics through desk-based research and learning from similar programmes, but you also need to carry out some primary research and engagement.

People with protected characteristics are often described as ‘hard to reach’ but you will find everyone can be reached – you just need to tailor your approach, so it is accessible for them.

Please feel free to contact the [Equality and Diversity mailbox](#) who will try to help you to assess the impacts of your proposals and will ensure that you help the Council to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Section 1 – Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of a service, strategy, function or procedure

Proposal Title	Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans
Date of Assessment	08.04.25
Assessment Lead Officer Name and other officers involved	Hannah Webster / Laura Prendeville
Directorate/ Service	Place/ Highways and Transport
Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure.	<p>Central Government has an objective for 50% of all local journeys in towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030. To support this, Active Travel England (the commissioning body and inspectorate for active travel) have rated each Local Authority on their performance and capability to make schemes that will support this objective, with a focus on three areas - local leadership, plans and delivery record. Funding allocations are based upon these capability levels.</p> <p>In recent months, an Active Travel Strategy for Cheshire East has been drafted to share our vision and actions. This document will replace the existing Cycling Strategy 2017. Alongside this, a suite of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) have been developed, setting out an evidence-based prioritised network of walking and cycling routes, following LCWIP guidance set out by the Department for Transport. LCWIPs are already in place for</p>

	<p>the towns of Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield and Wilmslow. The towns outlined in this set of LCWIPs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alsager • Handforth • Knutsford • Nantwich • Middlewich • Poynton • Sandbach <p>Once these LCWIPs have been adopted, this would mean all service centres and principal towns in Cheshire East have an LCWIP. Following consultation, it is envisaged amendments will be made where appropriate and documents will follow the approval process for adoption.</p> <p>Future funding will be sought to progress and deliver the walking and cycling networks set out within the LCWIPs.</p> <p>Cheshire East is currently rated as Level 1, defined as a local authority with some local leadership and support with developing plans and isolated interventions. To support an ambition to increase this level, we must actively develop plans and deliver infrastructure that supports this.</p> <p>A consultation is proposed in 2025 to seek the views of stakeholders and residents on both the draft Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs.</p> <p>The consultation will assess the extent to which stakeholders and the public agree or disagree with the draft vision and themes in the Active Travel Strategy and the extent to which there is agreement or disagreement with the LCWIP prioritised routes.</p>
<p>Who is impacted?</p>	<p>All residents of Cheshire East could be impacted by the Active Travel Strategy.</p> <p>We don't know exactly how these individuals will be impacted as consultation is yet to be carried out, but we believe the majority of the impacts to those with protected characteristics and those without will be positive due to improving walking and cycling facilities. The active travel strategy and LCWIPs are positive documents which set out how to improve things for all residents, including those with protected characteristics.</p>

	<p>The LCWIPs provide a prioritised programme of walking and cycling routes in the towns of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alsager • Handforth • Knutsford • Nantwich • Middlewich • Poynton • Sandbach <p>The Active Travel Strategy sets out clear actions, including development of specific infrastructure plans and supporting policies to deliver the wider aims, including the Access Control Barrier Policy.</p> <p>As these are both strategy documents, future work will be required to design and implement schemes and investment programmes identified within the LCWIPs.</p> <p>Further Equality Impact Assessments will be conducted for schemes and investment programmes as they come forward.</p> <p>The following individuals are likely to be affected by the Active Travel Strategy and various LCWIPs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public (including residents and visitors to the borough) • Cheshire East Council stakeholders • Schools and educational establishments • Neighbouring local authorities and Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington • Statutory transport bodies (Active Travel England) • Town and Parish councils • Manchester Airport Group • Umbrella organisations for people with specialist transport needs and protected characteristics, will help fill gaps in existing knowledge and provide valuable input at this consultation stage, these groups include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Age UK ○ Space4Autism ○ Disability Information Bureau (DIB) ○ Cheshire Centre for Independent Living ○ Deafness Support Network ○ ADCA Medical Transport Service ○ Care4CE
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- Leonard Cheshire Disability
- The Stroke Association
- The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory
- CEC adult and social care services
- Disability Info Bureau
- Transport interest groups below have an active interest and knowledge in cycling and walking, such groups include:
 - Travel Cheshire
 - Campaign for Better Transport
 - Local Cycling Groups
 - Active Cheshire
 - NW Transport Activists Roundtable
 - Passenger Transport Consortium
 - Transport Focus
- Environmental groups, such as:
 - Campaign to Protect Rural England
 - Cheshire Wildlife Trust
 - Canals and Rivers Trust
 - The Environment Agency
 - Natural England
 - The Joint Nature Conservation Committee
 - Macclesfield Canal Society
 - Countryside Access Forum
- Transport Charities, such as:
 - Cycling UK
 - Living Streets
 - Sustrans
- MPs
- National Trust

This list has been devised considering those that are impacted by active travel across the borough who could be affected positively or negatively by the Active Travel Strategy and various LCWIPs.

For the consultation on the Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs, this will involve producing a stakeholder list to contact regarding the consultation. This includes representatives and groups who share one or more protected characteristic. This direct engagement will help to foster good relations and ensure these groups are contacted about the draft documents, so that they can share their experience and influence the final document.

	<p>Getting input from these groups at this early stage, particularly those who share one or more protected characteristics, will help to shape the Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs before these are finalised.</p> <p>Transport groups have an active interest and knowledge in walking and cycling and groups as mentioned above will help fill gaps in existing knowledge and provide valuable input at consultation stage.</p>
<p>Links and impact on other services, strategies, functions or procedures.</p>	<p>The Cheshire East plan recognises the importance of the transport network in supporting key strategic objectives. For example, the plan sets out a vision for a ‘thriving and sustainable place’, to achieve this vision one of the plan’s priorities is to provide ‘a transport network that is safe and promotes active travel’. This includes improving active travel routes, as well as providing improved connectivity across the local authority. The Active Travel Strategy will outline the role walking, wheeling and cycling will play in delivering this vision and priorities.</p> <p>Consultation on the draft documents will take place in 2025 to gain feedback on the proposed documents including their vision and routes.</p> <p>These documents will need to align with the vision and aims and priorities of the forthcoming LTP. The Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs align with those that are drafted and undergoing consultation at time of writing</p> <p>There are draft networks in the towns of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alsager • Handforth • Knutsford • Nantwich • Middlewich • Poynton • Sandbach <p>These draft routes, when adopted, will help for future funding bids, gone through evidence led process to determine the routes.</p>
<p>How does the service, service change, strategy, function or procedure</p>	<p>The Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs will seek to support modal shift to active travel throughout Cheshire East. Currently Cheshire East as a whole has large inequalities</p>

<p>help the Council meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty?</p>	<p>across the borough in terms of health and wellbeing, especially in areas such as Crewe and Macclesfield¹. Therefore, the uptake of active travel will help improve health and wellbeing of the area will help reduce health inequalities, reducing the risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, depression, the occurrence of asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer, cardiovascular disease and reduce road traffic noise-induced hearing loss.</p> <p>The Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs will help provide an improved network of routes throughout Cheshire East which will improve access to key facilities and services, in turn increasing equality of opportunities for all.</p> <p>By improving active travel links within Cheshire East, and the uptake of these modes, in turn this will create more attractive neighbourhoods and communities, strengthening the sense of place in Cheshire East. The Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs are inclusive and aim to foster good relationships with all areas of the community, including those with protected characteristics.</p>
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Section 2 - Information – What do you know?

<p>What do you know?</p>	<p>Some information on the protected characteristics is set out below. The Active Travel Strategy and the LCWIPs are positive, forward-thinking documents aiming to improve facilities for all residents, including those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>Age</p> <p>The Census 2021 shows there is a significant proportion of the Cheshire East population in the 65+ age category which has increased since the 2011 Census².</p> <p>Cheshire East has a larger proportion of the population in the older age category of over 65 (22.3%) compared to Cheshire West (21.3%), the Northwest (18.7%) and England (18.4%) which demonstrates that Cheshire East has a higher ageing population.</p> <p>Declining health, balance issues, and concerns about falls are</p>
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¹ [Tartan Rug 2022](#)

² [Age by single year - Nomis - ONS](#)

	<p>significant barriers for older adults. These physical challenges can make activities like walking and cycling more difficult.</p> <p>Disability</p> <p>According to the National Travel Survey there is little difference between the number of trips taken by bus for those with and without mobility difficulties. However, the number of trips by cycle, and walking are significantly lower for those with a mobility difficulty compared to those without.</p> <p>According to the 2021 Census Cheshire East has a lower proportion of residents who have a registered disability compared to the North West, however it is similar to the national average of 17.3%³.</p> <p>Gender reassignment</p> <p>No information reviewed at present.</p> <p>Pregnancy and maternity</p> <p>No information reviewed at present.</p> <p>Race and ethnicity</p> <p>Taken from the 2021 Census Cheshire East's households speaking English as their first language is between 90 and 99.6%⁴. The areas with a lower percentage are in and around Crewe, with around 60.9% to 90%.</p> <p>According to the 2021 Census Cheshire East's population is 96.7% white, this is a larger proportion compared to the North West and England, being 6.5% higher than the North West and 10.7% higher than England⁵. The percentage of all other ethnic groups is lower than the national average, the most significant difference is the 6% lower percentage population of Asian/Asian British people in Cheshire East compared to the national average.</p> <p>Religion or belief</p> <p>No information reviewed at present.</p> <p>Sex</p>
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³ [Disability by car or van availability - Nomis - ONS](#)

⁴ [Household language - Nomis - ONS](#)

⁵ [Ethnic group - Nomis - ONS](#)

	<p>Research nationally has found that a higher proportion of men cycle due to their willingness to cycle with motorised traffic. Additionally, in countries where high quality cycling infrastructure is provided there is a more even balance of men and women cyclists with greater gender equality. This scheme is being designed aim to give higher quality cycle routes that may contribute to addressing this gender inequality.</p> <p>UK Opinions and Lifestyle Survey⁶, undertaken in 2021, shows that one in two women and one in seven men felt unsafe walking alone after dark in a quiet street near their home, with two out of three women aged 16 to 34 years having experienced one form of harassment in the previous 12 months.</p> <p>The experiences of women and girls in a transport report⁷ produced in March 2022 found that 85% of participants thought about safety when planning a journey which influenced routes, times travelled and avoiding certain modes.</p> <p>Furthermore, those that felt very safe across several modes was between 15-30%, much lower than those using a car (59%).</p> <p>Sexual orientation</p> <p>No information reviewed at present</p> <p>Marriage and civil partnership</p> <p>No information reviewed at present</p>
<p>Information you used to arrive at the decision</p>	<p>As part of the LTP evidence base produced last year, numerous data has been collected that has been considered when developing the LCWIPs and Active Travel Strategy. Some information which relates to the protected characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the National Travel Survey 2021 there is little difference between the number of trips taken by bus for those with and without mobility difficulties. However, the number of trips by cycle, and walking are significantly lower for those with a mobility difficulty compared to those without.

⁶ [UK Opinions and Lifestyle Survey](#)

⁷ [Experiences of women and girls on transport](#)

- The Census 2021 shows that Cheshire East has a lower proportion of residents who have a registered disability compared to the Northwest, however it is similar to the national average of 17.3%.
- The Census 2021 shows there is a significant proportion of the Cheshire East population in the 65+ age category which has increased since the 2011 Census. Cheshire East has a larger proportion of the population in the older age category of over 65 (22.3%) compared to Cheshire West (21.3%), the Northwest (18.7%) and England (18.4%) which demonstrates that Cheshire East has a higher ageing population.
- UK Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, undertaken in 2021, shows that one in two women and one in seven men felt unsafe walking alone after dark in a quiet street near their home, with two out of three women aged 16 to 34 years having experienced one form of harassment in the previous 12 months.

The Active Travel Strategy acts as an overarching policy for the borough in terms of active travel and therefore the document will have the potential to impact everyone across the borough including those with protected characteristics. The draft Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs will be consulted on later in 2025, giving those with protected characteristics to have their say.

As part of the consultation, meetings will be held with cycle groups and reps in each of the towns where an LCWIP has been created:

- Alsager
- Handforth
- Knutsford
- Nantwich
- Middlewich
- Poynton
- Sandbach

We are early in the process of thinking about the consultation for this so some of the detail is to be worked out (i.e. meetings with cycle reps and groups) but we have reflected out current thinking.

	Following consultation, the impact on those with protected characteristics will be explored in greater detail in future iterations of this EIA.
Gaps in your Information	<p>The Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs provide a comprehensive assessment of active travel within the borough, and these are positive documents with the aim of making positive changes for all residents. However, there is some information on some of the protected characteristics that will be unavailable. The public consultation in 2025 provides an opportunity to have greater engagement with these groups to improve knowledge on these protected characteristics and ensure the interventions outlined in the various LCWIPs and proposals in the Active Travel Strategy are understood and mitigated against.</p> <p>We are early in the process of thinking about the consultation for this so some of the detail is to be worked out (i.e. meetings with cycle reps and groups) but we have reflected out current thinking.</p>

Section 3 - Information - What did people tell you?

What did people tell you about your proposals?	<p>Consultation and engagement are yet to be undertaken. Future updates to this EIA will be made following the public consultation later in 2025. As part of the LCWIP process, meetings were held with local representatives to gain local knowledge of each of the towns including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alsager • Handforth • Knutsford • Nantwich • Middlewich • Poynton • Sandbach <p>We are early in the process of thinking about the consultation for this so some of the detail is to be worked out (i.e. meetings with cycle reps and groups) but we have reflected out current thinking.</p>
Details and dates of the consultation/s and/or engagement activities	<p>At this stage a period of consultation is planned to run for 4 weeks during the summer of 2025.</p> <p>Groups representing those who share one or more protected</p>

	<p>characteristics will be included within the stakeholder list and contacted when the consultation goes live to ask for their input and feedback. Liaison with the council's participation team will be carried out to ensure contact is made with groups e.g. SEND, LGBTQ+, carers. Whilst the specific detail is being worked through, meetings will be held with cycle groups and reps in each of the towns where an LCWIP has been created, this is to allow them to feed into this process.</p>
<p>Are there any gaps in consultation and engagement feedback?</p>	<p>As part of the preparation for the consultation, a list of key stakeholders will be drawn up and engagement will be ongoing throughout the consultation. This consultation will be undertaken through email and online, as well as meetings with cycle groups and reps and promotional material provided across the borough.</p> <p>We are early in the process of thinking about the consultation for this so some of the detail is to be worked out (i.e. meetings with cycle reps and groups) but we have reflected out current thinking.</p>

Section 4 - Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know?	What did people tell you?	What does this mean?
Age	<p>The Census 2021 shows there is a significant proportion of the Cheshire East population in the 65+ age category which has increased since the 2011 Census.</p> <p>Cheshire East has a larger proportion of the population in the older age category of over 65 (22.3%) compared to</p>	<p><i>Engagement yet to be undertaken</i></p>	<p>It is necessary to ensure that residents across Cheshire East can access the key services and facilities that are needed in everyday life, such as GPs, hospitals, supermarkets and leisure opportunities. Accessible walking infrastructure is essential for older people and more vulnerable groups. This can include ensuring there are dropped kerbs for</p>

	<p>Cheshire West (21.3%), the Northwest (18.7%) and England (18.4%) which demonstrates that Cheshire East has a higher ageing population.</p> <p>Declining health, balance issues, and concerns about falls are significant barriers for older adults. These physical challenges can make activities like walking and cycling more difficult.</p>		<p>example. This in turn helps reduce social isolation due to providing safe infrastructure that people are comfortable using. Furthermore, walking is an essential part of connecting to other transport hubs such as bus stations, rail and other local facilities. For the younger population in Cheshire East, they are not able to drive and are therefore more likely to walk and cycle to reach their destination. Therefore, it is essential that well connected, accessible walking and cycling routes are provided to address the imbalance are provided around Cheshire East to better serve those with mobility difficulties. As well as promoting sustainable choices to young people, as habits last a lifetime. It is also expected that schemes will be designed in accordance with the latest relevant statutory and non-statutory guidance.</p>
Disability	<p>According to the National Travel Survey there is little difference between the number of trips taken by bus for those with and without mobility difficulties. However, the number of trips by cycle, and walking are significantly lower for those with a mobility difficulty compared to those without.⁸</p>	<i>Engagement yet to be undertaken</i>	<p>It is essential that well connected, active travel routes are provided around Cheshire East to better serve those with disabilities. There is a need for a cohesive, accessible active travel network for all in the borough – including those with disabilities who suffer a higher risk of social isolation</p>

⁸ [National Travel Survey: 2021 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2021)

	According to the 2021 Census Cheshire East has a lower proportion of residents who have a registered disability compared to the North West, however it is similar to the national average of 17.3%. For this group.		and poor standards of living with mobility difficulties. It is also expected that schemes will be designed in accordance with the latest relevant statutory and non-statutory guidance.
Gender reassignment	No information reviewed at present.	<i>Engagement yet to be undertaken</i>	Individuals who have gone through gender reassignment may face challenges related to safety and comfort in public spaces. This can affect their willingness to engage in walking and cycling. Therefore, it is important to make sure walking and cycling infrastructure is safe and accessible for all. It is also expected that schemes will be designed in accordance with the latest relevant statutory and non-statutory guidance.
Pregnancy and maternity	No information reviewed at present.	<i>Engagement yet to be undertaken</i>	Pregnancy can affect balance and coordination. Maternity, for example, mothers carrying babies, and pram use is also important to consider. Therefore, it is important to ensure all walking and cycling infrastructure is of high quality, and clear of hazards and obstacles to ensure trips and slips are kept to a minimum so those during pregnancy and maternity

			<p>can easily utilise the infrastructure.</p> <p>It is also expected that schemes will be designed in accordance with the latest relevant statutory and non-statutory guidance.</p>
Race/ethnicity	<p>Taken from the 2021 Census Cheshire East's households speaking English as their first language is between 90 and 99.6%. The areas with a lower percentage are in and around Crewe, with around 60.9% to 90%.</p> <p>According to the 2021 Census Cheshire East's population is 96.7% white, this is a larger proportion compared to the North West and England, being 6.5% higher than the North West and 10.7% higher than England. The percentage of all other ethnic groups is lower than the national average, the most significant difference is the 6% lower percentage population of Asian/Asian British people in Cheshire East compared to the national average.</p>	<i>Engagement yet to be undertaken</i>	<p>It is important that any information regarding walking and cycling is provided in alternative languages, where there is demand for this, to promote inclusivity. Other than this, the Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs are not envisaged to have a unique impact on this group at this stage, subject to engagement being undertaken.</p> <p>It is also expected that schemes will be designed in accordance with the latest relevant statutory and non-statutory guidance.</p>
Religion or belief	No information reviewed at present	<i>Engagement yet to be undertaken</i>	<p>The Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs are not envisaged to have a unique impact on this group at this stage, subject to engagement being undertaken.</p>

<p>Sex</p>	<p>Research nationally has found that a higher proportion of men cycle due to their willingness to cycle with motorised traffic. Additionally, in countries where high quality cycling infrastructure is provided there is a more even balance of men and women cyclists with greater gender equality. This scheme is being designed aim to give higher quality cycle routes that may contribute to addressing this gender inequality</p> <p>UK Opinions and Lifestyle Survey⁹, undertaken in 2021, shows that one in two women and one in seven men felt unsafe walking alone after dark in a quiet street near their home, with two out of three women aged 16 to 34 years having experienced one form of harassment in the previous 12 months.</p> <p>The experiences of women and girls in a transport report¹⁰ produced in March 2022 found that 85% of participants thought about safety when</p>	<p><i>Engagement yet to be undertaken</i></p>	<p>Cheshire East need to improve the perception of safety when walking, wheeling and cycling through Cheshire East by improving factors actors such as lighting and signage. However, the research has emphasised that it is often others behaviour that was the issue.</p> <p>It is also expected that schemes will be designed in accordance with the latest relevant statutory and non-statutory guidance.</p>
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⁹ [UK Opinions and Lifestyle Survey](#)

¹⁰ [Experiences of women and girls on transport](#)

	<p>planning a journey which influenced routes, times travelled and avoiding certain modes.</p> <p>Furthermore, those that felt very safe across several modes was between 15-30%, much lower than those using a car (59%).</p>		
Sexual orientation	No information reviewed at present	<i>Engagement yet to be undertaken</i>	The Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs are not envisaged to have a unique impact on this group at this stage, subject to engagement being undertaken.
Marriage and civil partnership	No information reviewed at present	<i>Engagement yet to be undertaken</i>	The Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs are not envisaged to have a unique impact on this group at this stage, subject to engagement being undertaken.

Section 5 - Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

Mitigation	What can you do to mitigate any negative impacts or further enhance positive impacts?
<i>Please summarise the impacts listed in section 4 and what will be done to mitigate these impacts</i>	<p>The Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs are largely positive documents which hope to have a positive impact for all residents, including those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>Consultation will be undertaken 2025 on the Active Travel Strategy and the various LCWIPs to understand any impacts, positive or negative.</p>

	<p>The consultation will help to understand the potential impact of the Active Travel Strategy and various LCWIPs on residents including the protected groups and help to identify any mitigation / actions in relation to the protected characteristics. These protected groups have been factored into drafting the documentation so far and will be considered when LCWIP routes get taken forward to design.</p> <p>We are early in the process of thinking about the consultation for this so some of the detail is to be worked out (i.e. meetings with cycle reps and groups) but we have reflected out current thinking.</p>
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Section 6 – Monitoring and review

<p>Details of monitoring activities</p>	<p>The Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs will be subject to monitoring and review. The Active Travel Strategy will be actively monitored against four targets, these targets are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double the percentage of people cycling by 2030 • Increase the number of people walking regularly by 10% • Reduction in pedestrian and cyclists’ collisions by 5% by 2030 • Increase the number of physically active adults in Cheshire East by 5% by 2030 <p>In addition to the above, and to support our understanding of areas for improvement and track our progress, we will actively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, challenge and monitor the targets set in travel plans submitted to the Council. • Utilise our Streetlight data system, to review trends in travel behaviour and patterns, where applicable. The system utilises mobile phone data to provide information on journey mode and travel patterns and will aid decisions for infrastructure requirements that support active modes. • Work with our Public Health team and Care Communities to monitor social prescribing
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	<p>support and referrals where active travel has been supported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with major employers to support a culture change in staff travel, and to capture data on the journey to work. • Install and maintain a network of cycle counters, particularly for new infrastructure, to support evaluation of scheme delivery. <p>There is currently no funding to deliver the full networks set out in the LCWIPs, success will be based on funding secured to deliver the schemes.</p>
Date and responsible officer for the review of the EIA	It is recommended that the EIA be reviewed approximately 6 months after it has been signed off and post consultation.

Section 7 – Sign off

When you have completed your draft EIA, it should be sent to the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mailbox](#) for review.

If your EIA is approved, it must then be signed off by a senior manager within your Department (Head of Service or above).

Name	Richard Hibbert
Date	30/05/2025
Signature	

Once the EIA has been signed off, please forward a copy to the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mailbox](#) for it to be published on the website.

For Transparency, we are committed to publishing all Equality Impact Assessments relating to public engagement.

Help and support - For support and advice please contact the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mailbox](#)

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OPEN

Highways and Transport Committee

19 June 2025

Bus Service Improvement Plan - Delivery Plan 2025/26

Report of: Tom Moody, Director Transport and Infrastructure

Report Reference No: HTC/11/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report presents the Cheshire East Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Delivery Plan 2025/26 for approval (see Appendix 1). The plan was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) as a draft document on 31 March 2025, in line with DfT requirements. Any amendments required by Committee will be incorporated and a final version submitted to DfT by the end of June 2025.
- 2 Cheshire East Council has been allocated £5,444,474 from the DfT as Local Bus Grant 2025/26. A summary of the proposed schemes for delivery using this revenue and/or capital funding is set out at Appendix 2. Committee is recommended to approval this programme of work.

Executive Summary

- 3 The bus network in Cheshire East plays a key role in providing access to jobs and services and connecting people and places. The Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 (adopted in February) sets out a new vision and commitments for the borough. Buses have a vital role in delivering key Council policy priorities for the economy, social cohesion, public health and environmental sustainability, including decarbonisation.
- 4 Our 2024 BSIP includes a vision to: “Transform the bus network within Cheshire East to provide attractive, reliable and convenient connections that enable more residents and visitors to choose bus, make fewer car journeys, to contribute to our carbon reduction challenge and improve the

health of our citizens”. The vision for local buses is aligned with corporate strategic priorities and the emerging new Local Transport Plan (LTP).

- 5 To deliver this vision, a set of principles have been developed which shape our commitment to work in partnership with bus operators to improve the quality of local bus services in Cheshire East. They include:
- Connectivity: across the network and cross-boundary
 - Accessibility: network coverage, information and infrastructure
 - Integration: across modes of transport, technologies and ticketing
 - Reliability and punctuality
 - Sustainability: quality improvements and network growth
 - Decarbonisation: reducing vehicle emissions
 - Collaboration: with operators’ stakeholders and Bus User Groups.
- 6 As part of the DfT Local Bus Grant award for 2025/26, Cheshire East have been allocated £2,879,963 revenue and £2,122,646 capital. The proposed initiatives to utilise this funding are summarised below.

Revenue Funding (£2,879,963)

- 2025/26 bus service enhancements
- Continuation of Silk Town multi-operator Ticket (Macclesfield)
- Continuation of 16-19 Bus Saver (at £1 flat fare) and Care Leaver Pass
- Improved marketing, communications and promotion
- Support for the modernisation/reconfiguration of flexible transport
- Transport Focus (Passenger Satisfaction Monitoring)
- BSIP programme management.

Capital Funding (£2,122,646)

- Bus priority infrastructure delivery (traffic signal technology)
 - Bus priority scheme development – identifying new locations
 - Bus stop infrastructure – along strategic bus corridors and in towns
 - Macclesfield Bus Station – quality improvements / refurbishment
 - Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) – bus stations & interchanges.
- 7 The DfT Local Bus Grant (total £5,444,474) also includes £94,000 Capacity & Capability funding to support local authority delivery and £347,865 Bus Service Operator Grant which is a committed recurring annual allocation, therefore not new funding.
- 8 Appendix 3 provides an update on the proposals to reconfigure and modernise the Council’s demand responsive transport (DRT) services.

This is in accordance with previous Committee approvals. Appendix 3 includes the DRT service specification which is expected to be implemented later this year.

- 9 The proposed schemes and initiatives will deliver a strong package of complementary measures that support the BSIP vision for the bus network in Cheshire East. The aim is to enhance quality to attract new passengers whilst improving the level of service experienced by existing users.
- 10 The grant funding streams have been released after the MTFs was approved on 26 February 2025. Therefore, fully funded Supplementary Revenue and Capital Estimates are required to adjust the budget. As both items are over £1m, Full Council approval is required for these supplementary estimates and Committee is asked to recommend the items to Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways and Transport Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Delivery Plan 2025/26 (see Appendix 1) for final submission to the Department for Transport (DfT) by the end of June 2025.
2. Recommend to Full Council approval of the associated, fully funded Supplementary Revenue and Capital Estimates for the value of revenue funding £2,879,963 and capital funding £2,122,646.
3. Approve the proposals for spending the Council's allocation of Local Bus Grant funding (value £5,444,474) for the financial year 2025/26 (see Appendix 2) and delegate the authority to spend the funding to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Enhanced Partnership Board.
4. Approve the specification (see Appendix 3) for a modernised Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service as part of the Council's transformation programme and delegate authority to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to deliver the service in line with the specification.

Background

- 11 The Cheshire East BSIP is aligned with the National Bus Strategy for England and was refreshed in 2024 to incorporate the latest DfT guidance and ensure alignment with corporate strategic priorities. The Bus Enhanced Partnership provides the opportunity to work in partnership with local bus operators and deliver a range of schemes and initiatives in collaboration.

- 12 Our objectives and ambitions for local bus over the next 10+ years are published in the 2024 BSIP. These are split into three phases across our town, inter-urban and rural bus network.
- Phase 1 – stabilise the network
 - Phase 2 – quality improvements
 - Phase 3 – network growth
- 13 Short, medium and long-term ambitions have been identified within the 2024 BSIP, along with funding priorities. These have been used to continue to develop and inform the initiatives and schemes for delivery as part of the Local Bus Grant funding 2025/26.
- 14 The delivery plan builds on the schemes and initiatives which were launched with previous rounds of BSIP funding in 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Consultation and Engagement

- 15 In developing the 2024 BSIP, there was engagement with local bus operators, user groups, stakeholders, businesses and town and parish councils as part of the Enhanced Partnership (EP) Forums. Formal consultation has been undertaken as part of the formation of the 2021 BSIP and the Bus Service Review in 2024. The following meetings have enabled partners to inform and influence the proposed initiatives and schemes for the Local Bus Grant funding.
- Enhanced Partnership Forums in May and November 2024
 - Operator Working Groups in September 2024 and January 2025
 - Enhanced Partnership Boards in November 2024 and March 2025
- 16 The Council have an ongoing commitment to the Enhanced Partnership to support the delivery of the BSIP. Stakeholder engagement will continue for the proposed schemes under the Local Bus Grant funding. Formal engagement will continue through the Enhanced Partnership Forums (upcoming forum in June 2025), operator working groups and Enhanced Partnership Boards.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 17 The DfT has confirmed the Cheshire East funding allocation from the Local Bus Grant 2025/26 (totalling £5,444,474), which was subject to submission of a delivery plan and signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by 31 March 2025. This report provides the opportunity for Committee to amend the delivery plan and a final version will be submitted to DfT by the end of June 2025.

- 18 The grant funding will provide the investment to deliver the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and the delivery plan lists the schemes and initiatives which will be delivered, including key milestones for each scheme, an assessment of the outcomes and contributions to the BSIP.
- 19 The package of schemes and initiatives will continue the momentum and success of schemes funded by previous rounds of BSIP funding. The funding and proposed schemes will be used to improve bus services (including fare initiatives) and infrastructure.

Other Options Considered

- 20 The alternative option is to decline the opportunity to utilise Local Bus Grant funding and in so doing, propose no schemes and do not approve the 2025/26 delivery plan. DfT would therefore not release the Local Bus Grant funding, as the submission of the Delivery Plan 2025/26 and the related funding MoU is a national condition of the Local Bus Grant funding allocations.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	Delivery plan is not approved and/or the conditions of the MoU are not agreed. No new package of initiatives developed for 2025/26	DfT would not release the Local Bus Grant funding allocations.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 21 In developing and implementing the schemes and initiatives for the 2025/26 delivery plan, the Council must have regard to the transport needs of all of the residents in the borough, which may include disabled persons, persons who are elderly or have mobility problems and mothers with young children.
- 22 Development of plans will need to be in accordance with statutory and legal requirements for Community Engagement and Equalities Impact Assessment. The Council should consult with local bus operators, various organisations including the chief of police for the area to seek their views on the planned proposals.
- 23 The Secretary of State may issue secondary legislation and additional guidance in relation to the Local Bus Delivery Grant outcomes that feed

into future Enhanced Partnership plans and schemes, the Council must have regard to the guidance.

- 24 In implementing the package of interventions, the Council must have regard to its adopted Enhanced Partnership and ensure that the proposals meet the aims of the Enhanced Partnership.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 25 For 2025/26, the DfT have allocated a total of £5,444,474. Of this total, £2,879,963 is revenue funding and £2,122,646 is capital funding. There is an additional £94,000 Capacity & Capability Grant to support local authority delivery and £347,865 Bus Service Operator Grant (BSOG) which is a committed annual allocation and therefore not new funding.

2025/26	Total	Revenue	Capital	Other
Local Bus Grant – Cheshire East	£5,444,474	£2,879,963	£2,122,646	£441,865*

*Capacity & Capability Grant (£94,000) and Bus Service Operators Grant (£347,865)

- 26 DfT are clear that the Local Bus Grant funding is expected to complement, not replace the Council's supported bus budget. The agreed funds will be issued to the Authority as non-ringfenced grant payments under Section 31 of the Local Government Act. While this grant is non-ringfenced, there is an expectation that this funding is solely used for the purposes outlined.
- 27 The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is clear that the funding for 2025/26 is conditional on written confirmation from the Chief Finance Officer/Section 151 Officer and that they consider the funding has been used for the purposes set out in the MoU. It is also required that the Chief Finance Officer believes that it represents value for money (VfM) and that they will continue to monitor this and comply with the DfT's VfM reporting and approval requirements.
- 28 The DfT encourages the use of Bus Grant funding by March 2026. However, it is recognised that this may not always be possible, or to do so in a value for money manner, given the lead times on capital projects and usual lengths of tendered bus service contracts. Where necessary funding can be carried forward into 2026/27 and beyond March 2027 on submission of a Project Adjustment Request (PAR) form.
- 29 The grant funding streams have been released after the MTFs was approved on 26 February 2025. Therefore, fully funded supplementary

estimates are required. As both items are over £1m then Full Council approval is required for the supplementary estimates.

Policy

- 30 The BSIP 2025/26 Delivery Plan supports the delivery of the Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 (adopted in February) which sets out the corporate plan vision and commitments, as well as the emerging Local Transport Plan (LTP).
- 31 These documents recognise the importance of the bus network in supporting key strategic objectives such as reducing carbon emissions, reducing health inequalities, enabling employment and housing growth and improving quality of place.
- 32 The package of schemes identified under the Local Bus Grant funding work towards achieving the BSIP 2024 ambition and align with the LTP. The ambition states that the bus network will improve speed, reliability and quality of public transport, and encourage more residents to choose bus, make fewer car journeys and contribute to carbon reduction.

Commitment 1: Unlocking prosperity for all	Commitment 2: Improving health and wellbeing	Commitment 3: An effective and enabling council
A great place for people to live, work and visit.	Work together with our residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient.	Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making. Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation.
To reduce the impact on our environment.	Reduce health inequalities across the borough.	Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents.
A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel.		
Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all.		
To be carbon neutral by 2025.		

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 33 The Council has fully evaluated the equality implications of the proposed schemes under the Local Bus Grant funding through an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). The EqIA incorporates Transport Focus data and engagement with user groups and stakeholders through the Enhanced

Partnership. The vision to grow bus patronage in Cheshire East will benefit protected equality groups, particularly young people, older people and people with disabilities. An EqIA is included at Appendix 4.

Human Resources

- 34 There are no direct implications for Human Resources.

Risk Management

- 35 As the proposed programme is ambitious, the Council have developed a programme wide governance structure to ensure successful delivery of each package and workstream – see Appendix 5.
- 36 As part of this governance structure and corporate oversight, each proposed scheme has been placed into a workstream (in line with the national BSIP objectives) which include a dedicated workstream Project Manager, supported by an experienced BSIP technical team. Each workstream feeds up into a Revenue or Capital Delivery Board, and further, an overarching Strategic Bus Improvement Board which includes key enabling services such as legal, finance, procurement, research & consultation and communications.
- 37 Detailed programme management dashboards, including a risk register, decision log and stakeholder communications log have been developed for delivery and will continue to be maintained and updated throughout the life of the programme.

Rural Communities

- 38 The Corporate Plan outlines targets to reduce areas of the borough not served by public transport. The Council has already demonstrated a commitment to this through its successful bid to DfT funding as part of the Rural Mobility Fund, subsequent operations of the Go-Too service and continued delivery of the boroughwide FlexiLink service.
- 39 The Corporate Plan also identifies the desire for thriving and active rural communities by 2025. The importance of local buses for rural communities has been reflected in the Delivery Plan 2025/26 through proposed investment in rural communities and demand responsive transport.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 40 The Corporate Plan outlines the significant pressures in Children's Services, particularly placements for looked after children and services for children with special educational needs, including home to school

transport. A significant number of school children across the borough use buses to access educational establishments and this is considered in the Delivery Plan 2025/26 and package of interventions, aimed at young people and care leavers.

Public Health

- 41 There are pockets of deprivation in Cheshire East related to income, health and life chances. Bus services enable a greater proportion of residents to access important services such as health care and leisure (gym, swimming) facilities. The continued delivery of these services therefore helps to address the Corporate Plan target to reduce health inequalities across the borough. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is used to prioritise services based on their ability to serve highly deprived areas.
- 42 This will have a positive impact on health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents through improving access, reducing social exclusion and isolation and providing connections to health care, whilst reducing transport related deprivation.

Climate Change

- 43 Cheshire East Council have committed to be carbon neutral by 2025 and to influence carbon reduction across the borough in order to become a carbon neutral borough by 2045 – the decarbonisation of the transport network is a key component of this programme of work.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy) :</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	05/06/25	05/06/25
Janet Witkowski	Acting Monitoring Officer	05/06/25	05/06/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Name	Job title	13/04/25	15/04/25

Andrew Poynton	Senior Lawyer, Place		
Steve Reading	Finance Manager	13/04/25	17/04/25
<i>Other Consultees:</i>			
<i>Executive Directors/Directors</i>			
Tom Moody	Director of Transport and Infrastructure	23/04/25	25/04/25
DMT		08/05/25	08/05/25
CLT		21/05/25	21/05/25
Chair / Vice Chair		23/05/25	02/06/25
Phil Cresswell	Executive Director, Place	05/06/25	09/06/25

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Richard Hibbert Richard.Hibbert@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – BSIP Delivery Plan 2025/26 Appendix 2 – Indicative 2025/26 Funding Breakdown Appendix 3 – DRT Service Specification Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment Appendix 5 – Governance Structure
Background Papers:	Bus Service Improvement Plan 2024 Enhanced Partnership Plan 2025

	<p>Enhanced Partnership Scheme 2025</p> <p>The background papers and files relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.</p>
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Bus Service Improvement Plan Draft Delivery Plan 2025/2026

*March 2025 – DfT submission document pending Highways
and Transport Committee review and approval in June 2025*



**Cheshire East
Bus Partnership**
Connecting People & Places

Introduction

This document has been produced in line with Department for Transport (DfT) guidance on the 2025/26 Local Bus Grant funding (previously known as Phase 4). The Local Bus Grant (2025/26) includes both capital and revenue Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding.

In order to release this grant funding, Cheshire East Council need to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the DfT, setting out the terms and conditions of the grant funding and submit a proposed Delivery Plan by 31st March 2025.

This document provides a summary of the workstreams and schemes that Cheshire East Council, as the Local Transport Authority, have initially identified to deliver under the 2025/26 Local Bus Grant funding. These schemes (and the associated funding allocations) are subject to approval at Highways and Transport Committee in June 2025.

This high-level Delivery Plan also summarises the key vision and objectives from the 2024 BSIP and outlines the progress to date from previous BSIP funding allocations in Phase 2 (2023/2024 and 2024/2025) and Phase 3 (2024/2025).

The BSIP 2024 will continue to inform future priorities and schemes for development and delivery as further funding become available.

The overview of BSIP funding to date for Cheshire East is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: BSIP Funding Overview Table.

BSIP Funding	Total	Revenue	Capital	Other
BSIP Phase 2 (2023/2024)	£1,187,596	£1,187,596	£0	£0
BSIP Phase 2 (2024/2025)	£1,187,596	£987,596	£200,000	£0
BSIP Phase 3 (2024/2025)	£2,268,000	£1,818,000	£450,000	£0
Local Bus Grant (2025/2026)	£5,444,474	£2,879,963	£2,122,646	£441,865*

*Made up of Capacity & Capability Grant (£94,000) and Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG - £347,865)

Bus Service Improvement Plan 2024

Cheshire East has a rich natural environment, strong sense of community and successful economy, making Cheshire East one of the best places to live and work in the UK, with strong employment opportunities, attractive places to live and high standards of education.

The challenge is how we maintain our position, continuing to create sustainable growth that will support the wellbeing of our residents and the economy on which that depends, whilst protecting existing residents and green spaces.

Improving the bus network is critical to increasing sustainable access for all, to principal towns and key service centres, enabling residents and bus users alike to benefit from an established sense of community and successful economy.

Our Vision

To achieve this, we have developed our vision which will guide BSIP development and related initiatives.

*“Our vision will **transform the bus network** within Cheshire East to provide **attractive, reliable and convenient connections** that enable more residents and visitors to **choose bus, make fewer car journeys**, to contribute to our **carbon reduction challenge** and **improve the health of our citizens**”.*

Connected to our vision is the BSIP principles and overarching policy context. These BSIP principles (Figure 1) are our commitment to work together in partnership with our bus industry partners to improve local bus services for users and the residents of Cheshire East.



Figure 1: Cheshire East BSIP principles and overarching policy context

The 2024 BSIP outlines our ambitions for the bus network as well as our commitment to delivering improved services for existing bus passengers and growing passenger numbers by surpassing the expectations of non-bus users to encourage changes in travel behaviour.

We have adopted a borough-wide approach, building on the 2021 BSIP, aligning with the National Bus Strategy for England (NBSfE) objectives and through continued engagement as part of our Enhanced Partnership (EP) processes, collaborative engagement with neighbouring authorities and following the receipt of BSIP funding in 2023 and 2024.

Objectives and Ambitions

This document reiterates Cheshire East’s objectives and ambition for buses for the next 10+ years, which has already been published in the 2024 BSIP. These objectives and ambitions focus on three phases across our town, inter-urban and rural bus network.

Stabilise the Network	Quality Improvements	Network for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage passenger growth following the Covid-19 pandemic ▪ Build better relationships with local bus operators and passengers with our Enhanced Partnership & Bus Passenger Charter ▪ Continue to support services to ensure access to employment, education and health ▪ Improve access to information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve the bus fleet – newer, more modern vehicles ▪ Improve the town, inter-urban and rural networks, including flexible demand responsive transport ▪ Improve bus stop infrastructure and bus priority on core interurban ▪ Improve access to information and network identity ▪ Improve ticket offers and technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase frequencies of buses on our town networks, inter-urban routes and socially necessary services ▪ Provide more routes and route enhancements for access to services & jobs ▪ Expand flexible transport provision ▪ Improve bus priority and bus stop infrastructure ▪ Coordinate with new developments to capture s106 funding to encourage sustainable growth 
Continue	In Progress	Ambition

Figure 2: Objectives for the three key phases across town, inter-urban and rural bus networks

Short-, medium- and long-term ambitions have been identified within the 2024 BSIP, along with Phase 2 and Phase 3 funding priorities. These have been used to continue to develop the initiatives and schemes for delivery as part of the 2025/26 Local Bus Grant funding, as proposed in this Delivery Plan.

For further detail on the BSIP vision, objectives and ambitions please see the [2024 Bus Service Improvement Plan](#) published on Cheshire East’s website.

Progress to Date

This section outlines the initiatives and progress to date for Phase 2 (2023/24 and 2024/25) and Phase 3 (2024/25) funding.

It should be noted that due to the recent Bus Service Review (service changes starting 31st March 2025), the delivery of further bus service enhancements, as part of Phase 2 and Phase 3 funding was paused. It was important to ensure the continuity and stability of the core network of supported bus services (funded by the Council) before delivering BSIP service enhancements, which are additional and further extend the network.

Following the recent award of contracts to local bus operators for the supported bus network, further service enhancements funded by Phase 2 and Phase 3 allocations will be commissioned early in 2025/26.

Phase 2 initiatives

For Phase 2, the Council was awarded £1,187,596 in 2023/24 for revenue funding, with an additional £1,187,596 of funding in 2024/25 which was split into £987,596 for revenue and £200,000 capital funding.

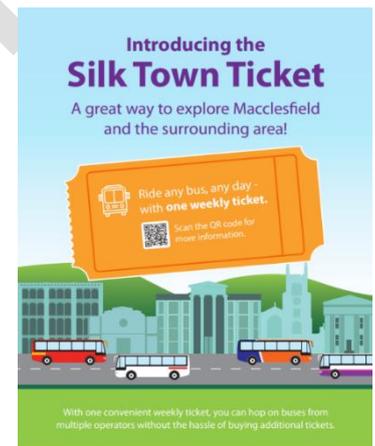
The Council has started to deliver BSIP initiatives, these are in the early stages of delivery but are already providing benefits to bus users within the Borough. These initiatives include:

The Silk Town Ticket

National Objective Alignment - Cheaper Fares

The Silk Town Ticket is a new weekly adult paper ticket that offers unlimited travel across multiple bus operators within Macclesfield and the surrounding areas.

This ticket is part of a one year trial running from September 2024 until September 2025, to simplify bus travel and encourage more residents and visitors to use public transport.



16-19 Bus Saver

National Objective Alignment - Cheaper Fares

The 16-19 Bus Saver is a new discount scheme for young people aged 16 to 19 who live in Cheshire East.

The pass was initially implemented so users could save a third on adult¹ single fares across all bus services, as long as their journey is within, starts, or ends in Cheshire East.

This has been under review following the adult single fare changes in January 2025, with proposed changes expected from spring 2025 providing a £1 flat fare ticket price.



¹ Revised following a review of uptake, feedback from users and as part of the 2025/26 funding allocation.

Buses in Cheshire East

National Objective Alignment - Easier to use for passengers

The Buses in Cheshire East website was launched and includes new travel planning capabilities, including bus service timetables and a journey planning widget (Traveline).

Promotion of System One ticketing

National Objective Alignment - Cheaper Fares

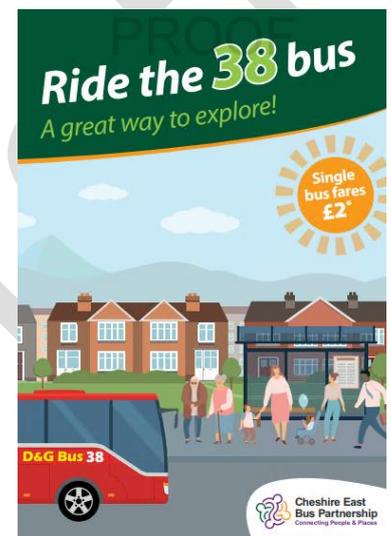
Promotion of Greater Manchester 'System One' ticketing options available to residents in the north of Cheshire East, prior to Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCA) introduction of bus reform (franchising). This enabled residents close to the boundary to access discounted travel.

Creation of hub stops along 38 bus route

National Objective Alignment - Easier to use for passengers

The 38 service is a strategic bus corridor connecting the principal towns and some key service centres across the borough. To complement operator investment in new vehicles, the bus stop infrastructure has been upgraded to Cheshire East's Gold, Silver and Bronze standards.

This initiative was split into three stages with stage 1 complete, stage 2 in progress and stage 3 in planning & costing (proposed to be delivered in 2025/26).



Local Bus Service Enhancements

National Objective Alignment - More frequent, comprehensive services

A range of weekend service enhancements were introduced in June 2024, which included the 130, 12 and 38 routes.

This has improved Saturday evening and Sunday service accessibility for bus users within the borough. Access for households within 40 mins to towns & key service centres by bus on a Sunday has improved from 20% pre-implementation to 54% post-implementation.

Phase 3 2024/25 Initiatives

Table 2 outlines the initiatives and progress to date for Phase 3 (2024/25) funding. For Phase 3 (2024/25), the Council was awarded £2,268,000, which has been allocated for revenue (£1,818,000) and capital (£450,000) expenditure. The Council has been developing these proposals, building on the delivery of Phase 2 initiatives, with the majority of schemes scheduled for delivery in 2025/26.

Table 2: Phase 3 - 2024/25 initiatives and progress to date

Description	National Objective Alignment	Progress to date
2024/2025 Bus Service Enhancements	More frequent, comprehensive services	Development of service enhancements for delivery in 2025/2026, including improved frequencies and extensions to existing routes, as well as additional weekend services.
2024/25 Multi-operator ticket (south of the borough)	Cheaper Fares	A recently commissioned feasibility study into the deliverability of a multi-operator ticket south of the borough. This is a commitment in the Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership Scheme and will develop lessons learnt from the Macclesfield Silk Town ticket trial.
Bus Stop Infrastructure on Strategic Bus Routes	Easier to use for passengers. Easier to understand services.	Upgrading bus stops to Gold, Silver and Bronze standards along a strategic route for delivery in 2025/26. This includes the 84/84X corridor, as well as further corridor development and prioritisation of stops and feasibility/specification of Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) systems for priority locations within the borough.
Reconfiguration of Flexible / Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)	Easier to use for passengers	Undertaking work to identify opportunities to modernise flexible transport solutions to support rural connectivity to towns and key service centres. Delivery of single integrated DRT service, with extended days and hours of operation (reconfiguration of FlexiLink and Go-Too) to open new travel options to service users and complement the fixed route network - expected launch of trial in autumn 2025.
Bus Priority Infrastructure	Faster and more reliable journeys	Delivery of bus priority signal technology along the Nantwich Road corridor and at High Town/West Street junction. This is currently ongoing and is scheduled to be operational from summer 2025.

Local Bus Grant (2025/26)

Table 3 outlines a package of initiatives for the Local Bus Grant (2025/26) funding allocation, within which the Council has been provisionally allocated £2,879,963 (revenue) and £2,122,646 (capital). Additionally, to support continued operations and delivery of the initiatives with previous BSIP and the 2025/26 Local Bus Grant funding, £94,000 has been allocated as part of Capacity & Capability funding and £347,865 for Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG)².

These have been based on the aspirations outlined in the 2024 BSIP aimed at enhancing the bus offer and delivering on our vision within Cheshire East:

- Improvements to bus services: service levels and network coverage.
- Improvements to fares and ticketing – simpler and more affordable fares.
- Improved bus information and network identify, including real-time information provision.
- Improved bus stops, bus stations and interchanges.
- Accessibility, inclusiveness, personal safety and security.
- Bus priority: delivering faster and more reliable services on priority routes and corridors.
- Collaboration with local bus operators to improve the quality of the bus fleet.
- Improvements to the bus passenger experience.
- Ongoing implementation of the Bus Passenger Charter.
- Longer term transformation of the network.

The proposed initiatives and schemes are subject to review and approval at Highway and Transport Committee in June 2025.

The proposed initiatives aim to deliver a strong complementary package of measures that deliver on the BSIP vision and ambitions and deliver improvements to passengers, invest in supporting growth and sustainability, as well as ensuring deliverability.

This high-level Delivery Plan, along with a signed Memorandum of Understanding, were submitted to the DfT on 31st March 2025 to enable the timely release of funding. The final Delivery Plan will be published following the Highways and Transport Committee meeting in June 2025.

² BSOG funding is a long-standing grant and is used to offset the supported local bus budget – it is therefore not new funding and is already committed.

Table 3: Local Bus Grant Funding (2025/26) - proposed initiatives and schemes

Description	National Objective Alignment	Initiative/Scheme	Expected Outcomes
Capital Funding			
Bus Priority Infrastructure	Faster and more reliable journeys	Further investment in bus priority measures, including Imflow technology at signal junctions. Targeting up to three locations within the Borough.	Improved bus journey times through key locations in the borough. Improved passenger satisfaction
Bus Priority Infrastructure	Faster and more reliable journeys	Development of future proposals for bus priority measures, including feasibility studies and design work at three prioritised locations.	Improved bus journey times through key locations in the borough. Improved passenger satisfaction.
Bus Stop Infrastructure on Strategic Bus Routes & Towns	Easier to use for passengers. Easier to understand services	Upgrades to bus stops to Gold, Silver and Bronze standards along strategic corridors and beginning the roll out of Gold stop upgrades in five towns.	Improved quality of waiting environments for passengers.
Bus Interchange	Easier to use for passengers	Funding to support the upgrade and improvement of Macclesfield Bus Station.	Improved quality of waiting environments for passengers.
Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI)	Easier to use for passengers. Better integration with other modes	Implementation of RTPI at eight locations within the Borough, followed by the prioritisation and implementation of a further three locations.	Improved passenger information.
Revenue Funding			
2025/26 Bus Service Enhancements	More frequent, comprehensive services	Development of further service enhancements, including improved frequencies and extensions to existing routes, as well as the consideration of new services.	Improved bus offer for residents of the borough. Increased accessibility to households within 40 mins of a town or key service centre.
Continuation of Silk Town Ticket	Cheaper Fares	Continuation of Silk Town Ticket trial until Mar 26.	Cheaper fares for people travelling within Macclesfield and surrounding areas.
Continuation of 16-19 Pass	Cheaper Fares	Continuation of 16-19 pass until March 27, consideration of a £1 flat fare, following market changes and feedback since initial implementation.	Increased 16-19 travel across the borough.
Improved marketing, communications and promotion	Easier to understand services	Marketing and communications budget to support the promotion of BSIP schemes and initiatives.	Greater understanding of bus offer in the borough.

Description	National Objective Alignment	Initiative/Scheme	Expected Outcomes
Continued support for reconfiguration of Flexible / Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)	Easier to use for passengers	Continuation of single integrated DRT trial service, with extended days and hours of operation (funding for 2026/2027 operations).	Improved offer and easier to use flexible transport to residents of the borough.
Transport Focus (Passenger Satisfaction monitoring)		Cheshire East have been supported by national Transport Focus team to monitor the satisfaction of passengers, in line with BSIP targets.	Enable the monitoring of passenger satisfaction with the delivery of the BSIP initiatives and with the wider bus network.
BSIP Programme (LTA Delivery)		Additional support for the delivery of the wider BSIP programme within Cheshire East Council.	Successful delivery of BSIP initiatives and schemes for 2025/2026

Table 4: Local Bus Grant Funding (2025/26) - proposed initiatives and schemes (initial funding allocation)

Description	Initiative/Scheme	Initial Funding Allocation (2025/26)
Capital Funding		
Bus Priority Infrastructure	Further investment in bus priority measures, including Imflow technology at signal junctions. Targeting up to three locations within the Borough.	£520,000
Bus Priority Infrastructure	Development of future proposals for bus priority measures, including feasibility studies and design work at three prioritised locations.	£102,646
Bus Stop Infrastructure on Strategic Bus Routes & Towns	Upgrades to bus stops to Gold, Silver and Bronze standards along strategic corridors and beginning the roll out of Gold stop upgrades in five towns.	£700,000
Bus Interchange	Funding to support the upgrade and improvement of Macclesfield Bus Station.	£50,000
Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI)	Implementation of RTPI at eight locations within the Borough, followed by the prioritisation and implementation of a further three locations.	£750,000

Description	Initiative/Scheme	Initial Funding Allocation (2025/26)
Revenue Funding		
2025/26 Bus Service Enhancements	Development of further service enhancements, including improved frequencies and extensions to existing routes, as well as the consideration of new services.	£759,463
Continuation of Silk Town Ticket	Continuation of Silk Town Ticket trial until Mar 26.	£70,000
Continuation of 16-19 Pass	Continuation of 16-19 pass until March 27, consideration of a £1 flat fare, following market changes and feedback since initial implementation.	£850,000
Improved marketing, communications and promotion	Marketing and communications budget to support the promotion of BSIP schemes and initiatives.	£150,000
Continued support for reconfiguration of Flexible / Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)	Continuation of single integrated DRT trial service, with extended days and hours of operation (funding for 2026/2027 operations).	£800,000
Transport Focus (Passenger Satisfaction monitoring)	Cheshire East have been supported by national Transport Focus team to monitor the satisfaction of passengers, in line with BSIP targets.	£24,500
BSIP Programme (LTA Delivery)	Additional support for the delivery of the wider BSIP programme within Cheshire East Council.	£226,000

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Appendix 2 – Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) – Indicative Delivery Programme 2025/26

Description	Initiative/Scheme	Funding (2025/26)
Capital Funding		£
Bus Priority Infrastructure	Further investment in bus priority measures, including Imflow technology at signal junctions. Targeting up to three locations.	£520,000
Bus Priority Infrastructure	Development of future proposals for bus priority measures, including feasibility studies and design work at three prioritised locations.	£102,646
Bus Stop Infrastructure on Strategic Bus Routes & Towns	Upgrades to bus stops to gold, silver and bronze standards along strategic corridors and beginning the roll out of Gold stop upgrades in five towns.	£700,000
Bus Interchange	Funding to support the upgrade and improvement of Macclesfield Bus Station.	£50,000
Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI)	Implementation of RTPI at eight locations within the Borough, followed by the prioritisation and implementation of a further three locations.	£750,000
TOTAL		£2,122,646
Revenue Funding		£
2025/26 Bus Service Enhancements	Development of further service enhancements, including improved frequencies and extensions to existing routes, as well as the consideration of new services.	£759,463
Continuation of Silk Town Ticket	Continuation of Silk Town Ticket trial until March 2026.	£70,000
Continuation of 16-19 Pass	Continuation of 16-19 pass until March 2027, consideration of a £1 flat fare, following market changes and feedback since initial implementation.	£850,000

Appendix 2 – Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) – Indicative Delivery Programme 2025/26

Improved marketing, communications and promotion	Marketing and communications budget to support the promotion of BSIP schemes and initiatives.	£150,000
Continued support for reconfiguration of Flexible / Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)	Continuation of single integrated DRT trial service, with extended days and hours of operation (funding for 2026/2027 operations).	£800,000
Transport Focus (Passenger Satisfaction monitoring)	Cheshire East have been supported by national Transport Focus team to monitor the satisfaction of passengers, in line with BSIP targets.	£24,500
BSIP Programme (LTA Delivery)	Additional support for the delivery of the wider BSIP programme within Cheshire East Council.	£226,000
TOTAL		£2,879,963

Appendix 3 – Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) Service Update

Introduction

This appendix supports the report to Highways and Transport Committee on 19 June 2025 seeking approval of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) delivery plan 2025/26. A key part of the plan is the implementation of a modernised / reconfigured demand responsive transport (DRT) service in Cheshire East.

Proposed Operating Model

In September 2024, the Highways and Transport Committee agreed to:

- Approve the current proposals for a revised supported bus network whereby the Council will:
 - On a trial basis, extend FlexiLink hours of operation to include 16:30-21:00 and provision of a Saturday service (09:00-18:00) and make it available for use by all passengers who do not have access to a fixed-route bus service.
- Delegate authority to the Director of Highways and Infrastructure to:
 - identify the most cost-effective delivery model for flexible transport which also meets the provision for home-to-school special educational needs & disability transport, in consultation with the Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration.

A DRT working group has been redesigning the FlexiLink service in line with approved recommendations, taking the lessons learnt from the Department for Transport (DfT) funded Go-Too pilot project and determining how these can best be applied to a new DRT service.

Proposals are progressing well, with the preferred delivery model being to continue sharing the existing vehicle fleet with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) school transport services to make efficient use of current resources. An overview of the current services and proposed operational model is set out below.

	FlexiLink Service	Go-Too Service	New DRT Service
Operating Area	All of Cheshire East	Rural area south and west of Nantwich	All of Cheshire East
Eligibility	Over 80, disabled, or no public transport	Available to all travellers in the operating area	Available to all travellers in the operating area
Operating Times (DRT)	Monday to Friday, 09:30 – 14:30	Monday to Saturday, 07:00 – 21:00	Monday to Friday 09:30 – 14:30, 16:30 – 21:00, Saturday 09:00 – 18:00
Operating Times (SEND)	Monday to Friday, 07:30 – 09:30, 14:30 – 16:30	N/A	Monday to Friday, 07:30 – 09:30, 14:30 – 16:30

Fare Cost	£3 per journey, free for concessionary pass holders	£3 per journey, £2 for concessionary pass holders	£4 per journey, free for concessionary pass holders
Booking Process	Telephone or email	Mobile phone app or telephone	Mobile phone app or telephone
Operating System	Basic database with limited scheduling – manual routing	Scheduling software & driver app for efficient routing	Scheduling software & driver app for efficient routing
Passenger Access	Door-to-door service	Pick-up points	Pick-up points with a door-to-door service by exception subject to users meeting criteria
Notice Period	From 1 month to 48 hours prior to travel	From 14 days up to 17:00* (telephone); or on-demand (app)	From 14 days up to 17:00* (telephone); or on-demand (app)
No of Vehicles	10 (+ 1 spare)	2 (+ 1 spare)	10 (+ 2 spare to improve reliability)

* Telephone bookings for Saturday travel must be made by 17:00 on Friday

With extended operating hours and deployment across the whole of the borough, a series of mapping tasks are being performed to ensure current demand levels are fully understood, alongside the scope to reach wider communities and improve accessibility. The service will still have limitations and must operate efficiently – creating zones within the borough will be necessary in order to maximise access and deliver a cost-effective service. Consideration is being given to the following:

1. Existing service users – current demand levels
2. Communities impacted by changes to fixed route services (i.e. Bunbury)
3. Primary care access

Whilst the proposed DRT service and booking system will not accept journeys where other bus services are available, it will offer connectivity between communities and key hubs to enable onward travel and widen the potential for bus travel.

The new DRT service will be launched as a two-year trial and the enhancements will be funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Phase 3 funding (£800k) and Local Bus Grant (£800k).

Next Steps

As we finalise the service redesign to deliver against the objectives of this DRT pilot scheme, we continue to work to the wider delivery programme with an indicative implementation date of autumn 2025. A comprehensive communication strategy is in development to ensure clear lines of communication for both existing and new customers, along with promotional and marketing campaigns to enable borough-wide exposure of the new DRT service.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and our equality duty

The Equality Duty helps public bodies to deliver their overall objectives for public services, and as such should be approached as a positive opportunity to support good decision-making.

It encourages public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs. By understanding the effect of their activities on different people, and how inclusive public services can support and open up people's opportunities, public bodies are better placed to deliver policies and services that are efficient and effective.

Complying with the Equality Duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. For example, it may involve providing a service in a way which is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic, such as providing computer training to all people to help them access information and services.

Whilst [the Gunning Principles](#) set out the rules for consulting with 'everyone', additional requirements are in place to avoid discrimination and inequality.

Cheshire East Council is required to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Act 2010 simplified previous anti-discrimination laws with a single piece of legislation. Within the Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149) has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, by consciously thinking about equality when making decisions (such as in developing policy, delivering services and commissioning from others)
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, by removing disadvantages, meeting their specific needs, and encouraging their participation in public life
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not

The Equality Act identifies nine 'protected characteristics' and makes it a legal requirement to make sure that people with these characteristics are protected from discrimination:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Applying the equality duty to engagement

If you are developing a new policy, strategy or programme you may need to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. You may be able to ascertain the impact of your proposal on different characteristics through desk-based research and learning from similar programmes, but you also need to carry out some primary research and engagement.

People with protected characteristics are often described as ‘hard to reach’ but you will find everyone can be reached – you just need to tailor your approach, so it is accessible for them.

Please feel free to contact the [Equality and Diversity mailbox](#) who will try to help you to assess the impacts of your proposals and will ensure that you help the Council to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Section 1 – Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of a service, strategy, function or procedure

(Please delete the guidance in italics once you complete a section)

Proposal Title	Bus Service Improvement Plan Delivery Plan 2025/26
Date of Assessment	07/04/2025
Assessment Lead Officer Name and other officers involved	Louise Greenfield Jenny Marston
Directorate/ Service	Highways and Transport
Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function	The bus network in Cheshire East plays a key role in providing access to jobs and services and connecting people and places. Buses are an essential component of an integrated transport network. They have a vital role in delivering key Council policy priorities for the economy, social cohesion, public health and environmental sustainability, including decarbonisation.

<p>or procedure.</p>	<p>Improving the bus network is critical to increasing sustainable access for all, to principal towns and key service centres, enabling residents and bus users alike to benefit from an established sense of community and successful economy.</p> <p>The Council’s refreshed Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) was approved by Highways and Transport Committee in June 2024, including an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). The assessment was undertaken to support the development of the BSIP, which incorporated Transport Focus passenger data and engagement with user groups and stakeholders through the Bus Enhanced Partnership. The BSIP is being delivered through a programme of work to spend the grant funding allocations from the Department for Transport (DfT) in line with the vision, objectives, and priorities of the BSIP.</p> <p>For 2025/26, a delivery plan has been produced in line with DfT guidance and this EqIA relates to the schemes set out below, which are subject to review and approval at Highway and Transport Committee on 19th June 2025.</p> <p>Capital Funding (£2,122,646)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus Priority Infrastructure – Further investment in bus priority measures, including Imflow technology at signal junctions. Targeting up to three locations in the borough. Development of future proposals for bus priority measures, including feasibility studies and design work at three prioritised locations. • Bus Stop Infrastructure on Strategic Bus Routes & Towns – Upgrades to bus stops to gold, silver and bronze standards along strategic bus corridors and beginning the rollout of gold stop upgrades in five towns. • Bus Interchange – Funding to support the upgrade and improvement of Macclesfield Bus Station. • Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) – Implementation of RTPI at eight locations within the borough, followed by the prioritisation and implementation of a further three locations.
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Revenue Funding (£2,879,963)

- **2025/26 Bus Service Enhancements** – Development of further service enhancements, including improved frequencies and extensions to existing routes, as well as the consideration of new services.
- **Continuation of Silk Town Ticket** – Continuation of Silk Town Ticket trial until March 2026.
- **Continuation of 16-19 Bus Saver** – Continuation of 16-19 pass until March 2027, with consideration of a £1 flat fare, following market changes and feedback since initial implementation.
- **Improved marketing, communications and promotion** – Marketing and communications budget to support the promotion of BSIP schemes and initiatives.
- **Continued support for reconfiguration of Flexible/DRT** – Continuation of single integrated DRT trial service, with extended days and hours of operation (funding for 2026/2027 operations).
- **Transport Focus (Passenger Satisfaction Monitoring)** – Cheshire East have been supported by national Transport Focus team to monitor the satisfaction of passengers, in line with BSIP targets.
- **BSIP Programme (LTA Delivery)** – Additional support for the delivery of the wider BSIP programme within Cheshire East Council.

The 2024 BSIP includes the following vision, which has been carried through into the 2025/26 delivery plan: *“To transform the bus network within Cheshire East to provide attractive, reliable and convenient connections that enable more residents and visitors to choose bus, make fewer car journeys, to contribute to our carbon reduction challenge and improve the health of our citizens”*.

The bus vision is linked to corporate strategic priorities and the Local Transport Plan (LTP). The delivery of the BSIP is split into three phases across our town, inter-urban and rural bus network.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 – stabilise the network • Phase 2 – quality improvements • Phase 3 – network growth <p>Short, medium and long-term ambitions have been identified within the 2024 BSIP. The 2025/26 delivery plan includes schemes which aim to deliver a strong complementary package of measures that deliver on the BSIP vision and ambitions and deliver improvements to passengers, invest in supporting growth and sustainability, as well as ensuring deliverability.</p> <p>The 2025/26 delivery plan schemes have been informed by stakeholder engagement (with both statutory and non-statutory consultees), this has occurred as early as 2021 and has continued at regular intervals (twice a year at EP Forums and three times a year at operator working groups) in the intervening years. Going forwards, ongoing engagement has been planned to monitor and evaluate the schemes throughout implementation.</p> <p>The DfT has allocated £5,444,474 to Cheshire East in 2025/26. This Bus Grant funding is provided to support the necessary investment and expenditure for delivery of the BSIP programme and the 2025-26 Delivery Plan submitted to the DfT. The package of schemes and initiatives will continue the momentum and success of schemes funded by Phase 2 and Phase 3 BSIP+ funding. The funding and proposed schemes will be used to improve bus services (including fares) and infrastructure which delivers tangible improvements for passengers.</p>
<p>Who is impacted?</p>	<p>All residents of Cheshire East may be impacted by the delivery plan as any optimisation of the existing bus network would involve the review of routes and the efficiency of existing services. These would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus operators • People who live / work in the borough • Education / training providers • Local businesses / employers • Anyone with a travel need in the borough <p>Specifically, it would impact residents, stakeholders and visitors with the following protected characteristics:</p>

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender;
- Race/ethnicity;
- Sexual orientation;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage/Civil partnership; and
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Religion & belief

There is a potential for varying impacts on some groups:

- Young People – can be vulnerable to social exclusion through reliance on public transport, walking & cycling. Personal security and the cost of public transport can be a barrier. Also, the desire to access public transport during evenings / weekends where availability is less.
- Older People – reliant on public transport and can face particular challenges relating to physical access to public transport. Also fear of crime can be a barrier.
- Disabled – can face particular challenges relating to physical access to public transport. Access to transport information is a potential barrier restricting, for instance, deaf and visually impaired people. Access to disabled parking can also be a challenge.
- Gender – women are likely to be more reliant on public transport than men which can impact on their access to services. Fear of crime can be more of an issue for women.
- Racial Groups – access to appropriate transport information could be a barrier through language difficulties and the ability to read / understand timetables.
- Deprivation – lack of access to a car can be a common cause of social exclusion. Cost of public transport can be an issue for those on low income who tend to be reliant on this form of transport and walking / cycling.

The sources used to collate the evidence listed above are pulled the 2021 and 2024 BSIP.

<p>Links and impact on other services, strategies, functions or procedures.</p>	<p>The package of schemes identified under the Local Bus Grant funding work towards achieving the BSIP 2024 ambition and align with the LTP. The LTP (2019-2024) outlines the role transport will play in supporting the long-term goals to improve the economy, protect the environment, improve health and wellbeing and the quality of place. It is noted that the LTP is currently being updated.</p> <p>The bus network in Cheshire East is a fundamental part of the local transport network providing accessibility to residents and businesses in the borough. The work to develop a BSIP and Enhanced Partnership with bus operators will assist in delivering the following strategic commitments (1, 2 and 3) in the Council’s new Cheshire East Plan (2025-29).</p> <p>Unlocking prosperity for all (1) and improving health and wellbeing (2) – undertaking consultation and engagement with the bus industry, users groups, key stakeholders and statutory consultees will ensure that the schemes outlined in the delivery plan are successful. Active and open engagement with the bus sector is fundamental to developing an improved bus network.</p> <p>Unlocking prosperity for all (1), improving health and wellbeing (2) and an effective and enabling council (3) – the approach to partnership working and data sharing with the commercial bus operators is expected to help the Council address some of the gaps and inconsistencies in the provision of local bus services across the borough.</p> <p>Unlocking prosperity for all (1), improving health and wellbeing (2) and an effective and enabling council (3) – through our responses to the National Bus Strategy, the aim would be to develop proposals that improve the local bus network and ensure it plays a stronger role in meeting the transport needs of local communities, encouraging greater reliance on local bus as a viable alternative, and more sustainable mode of transport across the borough. Achieving these outcomes will contribute to the Council’s aims for reducing carbon impacts and improving local air quality.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan outlines targets to reduce areas of the borough not served by public transport. The Council has already demonstrated a commitment to this through its successful bid to DfT funding as part of the Rural Mobility Fund, subsequent operations of the Go-Too service and continued delivery of the boroughwide FlexiLink service.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan also identifies the desire for thriving and active rural communities by 2025. The importance of local buses for rural communities has been reflected in the Delivery Plan 2025/26 through proposed investment in rural communities and demand responsive transport (DRT).</p>
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	<p>The Corporate Plan outlines the significant pressures in Children’s Services, particularly placements for looked after children and services for children with special educational needs, including home to school transport. A significant number of school children across the borough use buses to access educational establishments and this is considered in the Delivery Plan 2025/26 and package of interventions, aimed at young people and care leavers.</p>
<p>How does the service, service change, strategy, function or procedure help the Council meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty?</p>	<p>Improving the bus network is considered critical to increasing sustainable access for all, to principal towns and key service centres. This directly addresses the need to advance equality of opportunity by making essential services and opportunities more accessible to all residents, including those who may not have access to private transport due to age, disability, economic status, or other protected characteristics.</p> <p>The focus on improving access to employment, education and health through supported services directly supports equal opportunities in these critical areas.</p> <p>Service enhancements, including improved frequencies and extensions to existing routes, as well as additional weekend services aim to improve accessibility for residents across the borough, potentially benefiting those with mobility issues or those reliant on public transport for work or leisure. The improved Sunday service accessibility, noted to have increased access to towns and key service centres by bus on a Sunday, particularly benefits individuals who may have work or other commitments on weekdays or Saturdays.</p> <p>The 16-19 Bus Saver discount scheme for young people is designed to make bus travel more affordable for this age group, potentially increasing their access to education, employment, and social activities, thus advancing equality of opportunity for young people. The introduction of a £1 flat fare has further enhanced this scheme.</p> <p>The continued support for the reconfiguration of flexible / demand responsive transport (DRT) with extended days and hours of operation aims to support rural connectivity to towns and key service centres. This is likely to benefit residents in rural areas who may face greater transport disadvantage, thereby advancing equality of opportunity based on geographical location.</p> <p>Initiatives aimed at making bus services easier to use for passengers help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation mainly based around increased accessibility and safety initiatives. For example, the launch</p>

	<p>of the Buses in Cheshire East website with travel planning capabilities and the implementation of Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) can particularly benefit individuals with sensory impairments or those who require more detailed information to plan their journeys confidently.</p> <p>Upgrading bus stop infrastructure to gold, silver, and bronze standards improves the quality of waiting environments, making them more accessible and safer for a diverse range of users, including older people, disabled individuals, and those with young children. Improvements to bus interchanges like Macclesfield Bus Station can make the network easier to navigate for all passengers.</p> <p>Improved marketing, communications, and promotion of BSIP schemes aim to create a greater understanding of the bus offer, ensuring that information about services and improvements reaches all segments of the population.</p> <p>The introduction and continuation of initiatives like the Silk Town Ticket the 16-19 Bus Saver and the promotion of System One ticketing aim to provide cheaper fares. Affordable transport options are particularly important for individuals on lower incomes, thereby addressing potential economic barriers to access and promoting equality of opportunity. The feasibility study into a multi-operator ticket for the south of the borough also aligns with this aim.</p>
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Section 2 - Information – What do you know?

<p>What do you know?</p>	<p>The current network of local bus services operating across Cheshire East provide access between, and links within, the principal towns of Crewe and Macclesfield as well as to a number of smaller towns and parishes across the borough including Congleton, Wilmslow, Nantwich and Sandbach.</p> <p>The 2024 BSIP provides an evidence base (which has been informed by stakeholder engagement conducted by Cheshire East officers as well as Transport Focus, a statutory watchdog for transport passengers in Great Britain) for the schemes proposed and should be reviewed alongside this document. Below are key extracts of information from the BSIP based on that stakeholder engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 57% of Cheshire East bus services are fully supported and 22% are partially supported. • An average of 85% of the population in the AM peak period (weekday) can reach a town or key service centre
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	<p>within 40 minutes by bus).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An average of 25% of the population of the population on Sundays can reach a town or key service centre within 40 minutes by bus. • 27% increase in total passenger journeys in Cheshire East since 2021/22, only 9% are concessionary fare passengers. • 6.9 total passenger journey per head (2022/23). • Five bus stations and over 1,800 bus stops within Cheshire East. • 83% of respondents were satisfied with their overall bus journey a recorded in Transport Focus annual report March 2024. • 77% of respondents were satisfied with the punctuality of their bus at the stop. • 79% of respondents were satisfied with the value for money of their journey. • 74% of bus services provided by all operators were on-time. • 398,800 residents in 2021, an increase of 28,700 since the 2011 census. • Average population density is 392 inhabitants per km2. • 58% of the population is working age. • 20.5% of the population is 18 and under and 21.5% people are retirement age (66 and older). • A quarter of Cheshire East neighbourhoods are ranked in the least deprived areas of England. • With 7% of neighbourhoods in Cheshire East ranked in the most deprived 20% of areas in England. • 15% of households do not have access to a car or van. • 41% of households have access to 1 car or van, with 44% having access to 2 or more cars or vans. <p>To arrive at the assumptions outlined in section 4, the BSIP evidence base, stakeholder consultation and socio-demographic information (including 2021 census data and IMD data) has been collated and analysed.</p>
<p>Information you used to arrive at the decision</p>	<p>As part of the BSIP, Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and EP Scheme development, a comprehensive review of the current bus market within Cheshire East has taken place. This evidence base explores the following data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network and routes • Fleet composition • Bus user patronage and trends

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus passenger feedback and user groups • Fares and ticketing • Population and overview of socio-economic factors • The Cheshire East Council Tartan Rug • Bus accessibility and connectivity – mapping the current levels of bus accessibility across Cheshire East to principal towns and key service centres; and • Historic monthly patronage data from operators to identify longer term trends in usage as well as any seasonal variation. <p>The full evidence base is detailed within the latest Cheshire East Bus Service Improvement Plan.</p>
Gaps in your Information	It is not thought that there are any gaps in the information to date, but the evidence base and EqIA should be continually reviewed and updated to understand if any issues worsen, or new issues arise.

Section 3 - Information - What did people tell you?

What did people tell you about your proposals?	<p>Consultation events have occurred in the form of Enhanced Partnership (EP) Forums where all key stakeholders get a chance to feedback and review any proposals, all feedback received has been positive and informative.</p> <p>Regular operator working groups are held by the Council to receive industry updates, feedback and comments on any proposed scheme and will be continued throughout the life of the programme.</p>
Details and dates of the consultation/s and/or engagement activities	<p>As part of the process to develop the BSIP, engagement activities were undertaken with Councillors, Towns and Parishes, community groups, passengers and the public to collect a wide range of thoughts and ideas which helped to shape the vision and priorities for the bus network.</p> <p>The BSIP and EP documents are publicly available and have gone through the appropriate consultation channels. Statutory consultees that were consulted included:</p>

- All operators of local bus services
- Organisations that represent local passengers
- Other local authorities that would be affected by the proposals
- Traffic Commissioner
- Chief of Police
- Transport Focus
- Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)

The Enhanced Partnership (EP) Forum in particular allows for a wider conference of interested parties to raise thoughts and opinions on the BSIP and EP documentation. The EP Forum will consist of the following members and will facilitate future variations and updates to the BSIP, EP Plan and Scheme:

- Cheshire East Borough Council
- All local bus operators
- Bus User Groups
- Train operating companies
- Healthcare and education providers
- Police
- Chamber of Commerce
- Neighbouring Authorities and LEP
- Traffic Commissioner
- Engagement with schools as part of fares and ticketing products.

The following meetings have enabled partners to inform and influence the proposed schemes for the Local Bus Grant funding.

- Enhanced Partnership Forum May and November 2024
- Operator Working Group September 2024 and January 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced Partnership Board November 2024, March 2025 and May 2025. <p>The Council have an ongoing commitment to the Enhanced Partnership developed as part of the BSIP. Stakeholder engagement and consultation will continue for any and all of the proposed schemes under the Local Bus Grant funding. Formal consultation and engagement will be continued through the Enhanced Partnership Forums (upcoming Forum in June 2025), operator working groups and Enhanced Partnership Boards.</p>
<p>Are there any gaps in consultation and engagement feedback?</p>	<p>No gaps have been identified.</p>

Section 4 - Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

<p>Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010</p>	<p>What do you know? <i>Summary of information used to inform the proposal</i></p> <p><u>Refer to Section 2</u></p>	<p>What did people tell you? <i>Summary of customer and/or staff feedback</i></p> <p><u>Refer to section 3</u></p>	<p>What does this mean? <i>Impacts identified from the information and feedback (actual and potential).</i></p> <p><i>These can be either positive, negative or have no impact.</i></p>
<p>Age</p>	<p>Young people can be vulnerable to social exclusion through reliance on public transport, walking & cycling. Personal security and the cost of public transport can be a</p>	<p>It has been noted that elderly people are struggling to access medical appointments due to insufficiency in the bus network.</p>	<p>No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage however, there may be positive impacts on older and younger people who tend as groups to use public transport more than other age groups.</p> <p>Nationally, the proportion of trips made by bus is highest amongst those aged between 17 and 20. Young people also face barriers to transport, include the availability and cost of public transport, particularly to further and higher education. Bus use is higher for those aged 60 and over than</p>

	<p>barrier. Also, the desire to access public transport during evenings / weekends where availability is less.</p> <p>The elderly are reliant on public transport and can face particular challenges relating to physical access to public transport. Also fear of crime can be a barrier.</p>	<p>Uptake amongst the younger people is low due to affordability and attractiveness.</p>	<p>those in middle aged groups and this has been considered within the delivery plan.</p> <p>Within the delivery plan there is ambition to make bus services more appealing and available for residents within Cheshire East. There is a desire for fares to be cheaper, services to be more frequent and comfortable. These measures will be put in place to increase patronage and as a result existing bus users (including the young and old who make up a significant proportion of current bus users) will benefit from these service enhancements.</p> <p>The reconfiguration of DRT with extended days and hours of operation will also provide improved offer and easier to use flexible transport to residents of the borough, potentially benefiting older individuals in rural areas or younger people with less conventional travel needs.</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>The disabled can face particular challenges relating to physical access to public transport. Access to transport information is a potential barrier restricting, for instance, deaf and visually impaired people. Access to disabled parking can also be a challenge</p>	<p>Previous consultations have shown that people with disabilities make up a disproportionately high number of bus users. As a result of BSIP funding decisions, any future service alterations may leave residents isolated with no alternative travel options.</p>	<p>No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage, however positive impacts are possible depending on how the delivery plan is implemented but generally the BSIP and EP itself is intended to be positive.</p> <p>Key challenges faced by disabled people on the transport system include being able to access accurate and relevant travel information both before and during the journey, being able to access public transport interchanges, especially at night when these may be poorly lit, being able to access public transport vehicles and concerns regarding safety and comfort on the public transport network. This has been considered within the delivery plan.</p> <p>The delivery plan document proposes to enhance vehicle and bus stop accessibility (which is critical to anyone with a physical impairment) in a bid</p>

			to draw more passengers to local services. Similarly, more accessible information is proposed in an easy to read/understand format which will benefit passengers with visual, hearing and physical disabilities as well as all other customer groups.
Gender reassignment	Fear or crime can be an issue.	Issues around safety and inclusivity.	No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage; however, it is widely accepted that gendered abuse and sexual harassment are particularly associated with public transport with concerns around personal safety when travelling and this has been considered within the delivery plan.
Pregnancy and maternity	Women are likely to be more reliant on public transport than men which can impact on their access to services. Fear of crime can be more of an issue for women. Accessibility around pushchairs on buses can be an issue.	Issues raised around driver training and pushchair space/access.	No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage; however, a lack of adequate public transport provision creates further barriers to accessing medical establishments providing essential maternity services and has been considered within the delivery plan.
Race/ethnicity	Access to appropriate transport information could be a barrier through language difficulties and the ability to read / understand timetables	Issues around safety and inclusivity.	No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage however it is important to recognise that bus services are aimed at all potential users regardless of ethnicity. Consideration also needs to be given to how fears and risks of violence associated with public transport disproportionately affect people from ethnic minorities.
Religion or belief	Fear or crime can be an issue.	Issues around safety and inclusivity.	No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage; however, consideration needs to be given to how fears and risks of violence associated

			with public transport disproportionately affect people because of their religion or religious beliefs.
Sex	Women are likely to be more reliant on public transport than men which can impact on their access to services. Fear of crime can be more of an issue for women.	Issues around safety and inclusivity.	No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage; however, it is widely recognised that women are very often constrained by several barriers that shape how they travel. Women are also more likely to travel by bus and less likely to travel by rail than men and this has been considered within the delivery plan.
Sexual orientation	Fear or crime can be an issue.	Issues around safety and inclusivity.	No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage; however, it is crucial to consider how fears and risks of violence associated with public transport proportionately affects people from the LGBTQIA+ community.
Marriage and civil partnership	N/A	Not raised as a current issue for Cheshire East Bus Network in consultant or engagement events.	No negative impacts have been identified at this stage.

Section 5 - Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

Mitigation	What can you do to mitigate any negative impacts or further enhance positive impacts?
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<p><i>Please summarise the impacts listed in section 4 and what will be done to mitigate these impacts</i></p>	<p>Protected characteristic specific mitigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age – Gather further data from future consultation on impact and alternatives for older and younger people during consultation periods. Explore further possibilities for mitigation. • Disability – Gather further data from future consultation on the impact and alternatives for people with disabilities during consultation periods. Explore further possibilities for mitigation. <p>No further negative impacts were identified, and mitigation will be managed as outlined above for age and disability.</p> <p>Specific mitigation for some schemes has already been identified through previous consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-operator ticket – implement a robust governance structure and conduct 3 monthly reviews as recommended by participating bus operators. • 16-19 Bus Saver – implement a robust governance structure and conduct 3 monthly reviews as recommended by participating bus operators. • RTPI – consulting on different types of RTPI to understand what works best for passengers with protected characteristics. • DRT – periodic reviews and trial runs. • Service enhancements – periodic reviews around capacity and accessibility. Continued engagement to understand whether socially necessary journeys are being provided. <p>On a programme level, mitigation will be ensured for any potential negative impacts that arise through ongoing consultation and engagement (EP Forums and Operator working groups) alongside periodic reviews (subject to KPIs) and a robust risk register for each scheme.</p>
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Section 6 – Monitoring and review

Details of monitoring activities	As part of the BSIP and EP overarching process, the DfT requires quarterly monitoring against each scheme in the programme. In addition, dashboards have been set up to internal monitor the success of each scheme against set KPIs. Complaints are analysed as and when they are received, and adjustment are made as deemed necessary.
Date and responsible officer for the review of the EIA	It is recommended that the EIA be reviewed approximately 6 months after it has been signed off. The responsible officer for the review is Jenny Marston.

Section 7 – Sign off

When you have completed your draft EIA, it should be sent to the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mailbox](#) for review.

If your EIA is approved, it must then be signed off by a senior manager within your Department (Head of Service or above).

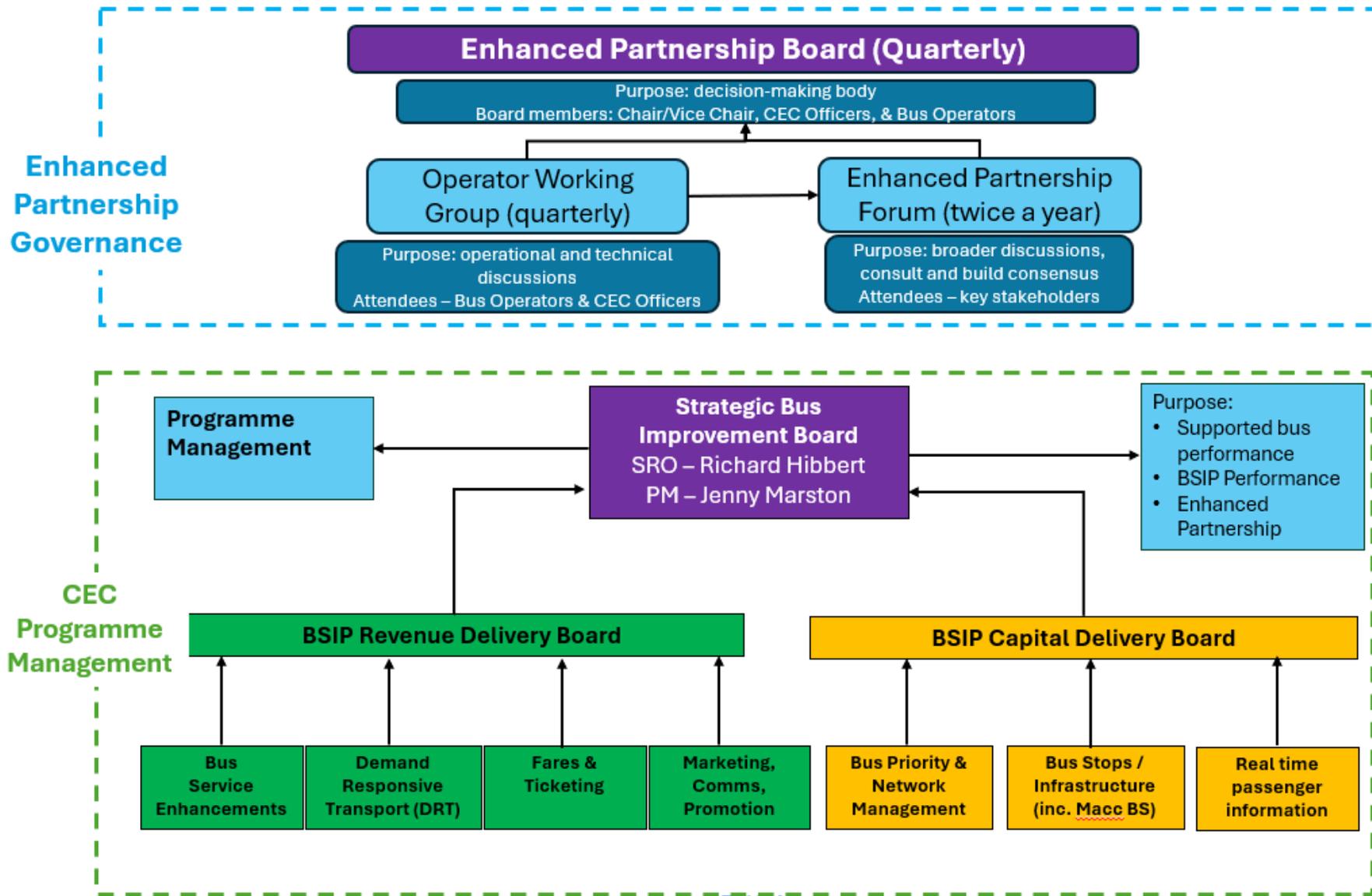
Name	Richard Hibbert
Date	30/05/2025
Signature	

Once the EIA has been signed off, please forward a copy to the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mailbox](#) for it to be published on the website.

For Transparency, we are committed to publishing all Equality Impact Assessments relating to public engagement.

Help and support - For support and advice please contact the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mailbox](#)

Appendix 5 – Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Delivery Programme 2025/26 – Governance



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OPEN

Highways and Transport Committee**19 June 2025****Final Outturn 2024/25****Report of: Executive Director of Resources (s151 Officer)****Report Reference No: HTC/01/25-26****Ward(s) Affected: Not applicable****For Decision and Scrutiny****Purpose of Report**

- 1 This report provides members with an overview of the Cheshire East Council final outturn for the financial year 2024/25. Members are being asked to consider the financial performance of the Council. The report also proposes treatment of year end balances that reflects risks identified in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy which was approved by Council on 26 February 2025.
- 2 To highlight financial performance across all Departments, and within Central Budgets shows how the Council is achieving its financial strategies and managing financial control and accountability.
- 3 Reporting the financial outturn at this stage, and in this format supports the Council's vision to be an effective and enabling Council as set out in the Cheshire East Plan 2025 to 2029.

Executive Summary

- 4 This report outlines how the Council managed its resources through sound financial planning, monitoring, and reporting to achieve outcomes and value for money.
- 5 The Outturn is reported as part of the Statutory Accounts and is therefore subject to audit. The audited Accounts will be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 4 December 2025.
- 6 The Council set its 2024/25 annual budget in February 2024. The budget was balanced, as required by statute, with planned use of reserves of £22m, plus £30m of savings to achieve in year, and included important assumptions about

spending in the year. The budget is part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024 to 2028.

- 7 The Third Financial Review (FR3) forecast revenue outturn was an adverse variance of £18.3m (prior to the application of any Exceptional Financial Support), an improvement of £1.8m from FR2.
- 8 Prior to the application of Exceptional Financial Support and a proposed £7.8m transfer to reserves (see para 68 below), the 2024/25 service outturn position is an adverse variance of £9.8m, reflecting an underlying improvement since FR3 of £8.5m, as detailed below in Table 1 (Total Service Expenditure plus Central Budgets).

Table 1	Revised Budget (NET)	Outturn	Variance	Forecast Variance FR3	Movement from FR3 to Outturn
Outturn 2024/25	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Service Committee					
Adults and Health	137.1	154.7	17.6	20.0	(2.4)
Children and Families	92.6	96.1	3.5	5.4	(1.9)
Corporate Policy	44.2	41.9	(2.2)	2.5	(4.7)
Economy and Growth	27.9	22.7	(5.3)	(3.8)	(1.5)
Environment and Communities	47.8	46.3	(1.5)	(0.6)	(0.9)
Highways and Transport	16.2	14.4	(1.8)	(0.5)	(1.3)
TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE	365.8	376.0	10.2	22.9	(12.7)
Finance Sub:					
Central Budgets	25.0	32.4	7.4	(4.6)	12.0
Funding	(390.8)	(390.8)	(0.0)	-	(0.0)
TOTAL FINANCE SUB	(0.0)	17.6	17.6	18.3	(0.7)
Exceptional Financial Support	-	(17.6)	(17.6)	(17.6)	-
GRAND TOTAL	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	0.7	(0.7)

- 9 Whilst an improvement on the Third Financial Review position of £8.5m, the service overspend of £9.8m remains a significant financial challenge for the Council. Cost pressures in Adults and Children's services remain a key issue. Details of in year pressures, ongoing impacts into 2025/26 and improvements against FR3 by Committee are reported in paragraphs 30 to 63 below.
- 10 The out-turn position, net of proposed transfers to useable reserves of £7.8m, is an overspend of £17.8m. This includes the setting up of a reserve to set aside sufficient one-off resources to be able to respond to the steps that will be

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necessary to support the delivery of our transformation, change and improvement activity especially in light of the recent publication of the non-statutory Best Value notice. This will be able to pump prime activities to ensure that change is made at pace to support our longer-term financial sustainability. Any use of this reserve will need to be recommended by the Chief Executive and Executive Director of Resources and any virements will then need to follow the usual approval processes.

- 11 As reported at FR3, in order to address the risk to services from the Council's budgetary pressures, there was an urgent report to Council on the 11 December 2024 on Exceptional Financial Support (EFS). The report sought the authority for the Chief Executive to request that the in-principle EFS of up to £17.6m by way of a capitalisation direction for 2023/24 and 2024/25 be able to be applied only in 2024/25, from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in order to address the Council's budgetary pressures during the financial year 2024/25. The costs of accepting the EFS support will impact over the medium term and these have been built into the 2025/26-2028/29 MTFs approved in February 2025.
- 12 As indicated in Table 2 below and recognising the request in the urgent report to Council on 11 December 2024, it is proposed that the full £17.6m conditional EFS is utilised for 2024/25 to cover the following:
- Overall Council overspend in 2024/25 - **£9.8m**
 - Creation of a further earmarked reserve to cover the one off costs of change and improvement activity in 2025/26 and 2026/27 - **£5.3m**
 - Transfer to General Fund Reserves - **£2.5m** to increase financial resilience into 2025/26 and future years.
- 13 The reserves position, after agreed movements budgeted for in the MTFs and new additional requests noted below, are £29.6m, being £6.3m General Fund and £23.3m Earmarked.

Table 2: Exceptional Financial Support and Reserves - Outturn	£m
2024/25 overspend – outturn (including Service EMRs)	10.2
Improvement on central budgets - Surplus levy grant	(0.4)
Tfr to Cost of Change and Improvement Reserve	5.3
Tfr to General Fund	2.5
2024/25 Revised Out-turn	17.6
Exceptional Financial Support	(17.6)
Outturn 2024/25	-
Reserves	
General Fund	6.3
Earmarked Reserve	23.3
Total Reserves at 31 March 2025 – Outturn Final	29.6

14 The outturn expenditure level for capital spending for 2024/25 was £88.4m against the original MTF5 budget set in February 2024 of £215.8m (FR3 £144.7m). The underspend of £56.3m (Out-turn compared to FR3) will be slipped into 2025/26 and future years. This level of slippage at 39% is a higher variance than 2023/24 (18%)

15 **Table 3** sets out the capital programme profiling changes from FR3:

Table 3	2024/25 Outturn £000	2025/26 Estimate £000	2026/27 Estimate £000	2027/28 Estimate £000	2024-28 Total £000
Capital Programme FR3	144,670	157,134	104,400	243,852	650,056
Funded by:					
Capital Programme Outturn	88,322	208,490	100,570	252,694	650,076
Funded by:					
Movement from FR3	-56,348	+51,356	-3,830	+8,842	+20

16 **Table 4** sets out the capital programme summary at the Outturn position by Committee:

Table 4	2024/25 Outturn £000	2025/26 Estimate £000	2026/27 Estimate £000	2027/28 Estimate £000	2024-28 Total £000
Adults and Health	280	468	0	0	748
Children and Families	9,722	56,131	21,604	20,749	108,206
Corporate Policy	5,465	10,125	1,173	0	16,763
Economy and Growth	25,723	56,534	32,905	81,762	196,924
Environment and Communities	5,915	18,606	2,184	15,301	42,006
Highways and Transport	41,217	66,626	42,704	134,882	285,429
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	88,322	208,490	100,570	252,694	650,076
Funding:					
Grants and Other Contributions	53,793	149,212	88,370	187,853	479,228
Capital Receipts and Reserves	901	2,500	1324	33,381	38,106
Borrowing	33,628	56,778	10,876	31,460	132,742
TOTAL FUNDING	88,322	208,490	100,570	252,694	650,076

17 During 2024/25 a capital review was carried out with a view to reducing and re-profiling the amount of capital spend funded by borrowing which has led to significant slippage. Continued scrutiny of the capital programme will be required to minimise and delay spend funded from borrowing to reduce the ongoing revenue in future years. The authority should aim to repay more historical borrowing than any new borrowing incurred in year to ensure that the total capital financing requirement begins to decrease and the long term position becomes more sustainable.

18 Capital receipts in year amounted to £2.2m against a forecast of £2m, of this £1.2 will be used to fund transformational costs with the remaining £1m supporting the capital financing budget as planned.

- 19 During 2024/25, we undertook a Balance Sheet review through our Treasury Advisors, Arlingclose Ltd. As part of that review, they considered the revenue impact of the current Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) policy currently in place and we asked them to assess our alignment with current Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance. Changes to the Accounting Policy for MRP were set out in the 2025/26 – 2028/29 MTFS - in summary the out-turn impact for 2024/25 is an improvement of £3.1m against the Capital Financing Budget.
- 20 The annex and appendix attached to this report set out details of the Council's financial performance:
- 21 **Annex 1: Outturn 2024/25** – Sets out detailed information for each of the following areas as at 31 March 2025 (per Committee area):
- **Section 1** 2024/25 Financial Outturn position
 - **Section 2** 2024/25 Approved Budget Change Items
 - **Section 3** Revenue Grants for approval and Grant Register
 - **Section 4** Capital
 - **Section 5** Reserves
 - **Section 6** Treasury Management
 - **Section 7** Investment Strategy

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways and Transport Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider the overall financial performance of the Council in the 2024/25 financial year, as contained within the report, as follows:
 - a) A Net Revenue Overspend of £17.6m against a revised budget of £365.8m (4.8% variance) funded by conditional Exceptional Financial Support (Capitalisation Direction) via borrowing.
 - b) General Reserves closing balance of £6.3m.
 - c) Capital Spending of £88.4m against an approved programme of £215.8m (59% variance).
2. Consider the contents of Annex 1.
3. Approve the new Reserves in the Reserves Section (**Annex 1, Section 5, Table 1**) which includes proposed movements to reserves.
4. Recommend to Council to approve the Supplementary Revenue Estimate (SRE) Request for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000 as per **Annex 1, Section 3, Table 1**.

5. Approve the Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCE) and Capital Virements between £500,000 and £1,000,000 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules for the following Committee's as detailed in **Annex 1, Section 4, Table 4**
6. Recommend to Council to approve the Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCE) over £1,000,000 in accordance with Budget and Policy Framework Rules as detailed in **Annex 1, Section 4, Table 5.**

Background

- 22 This single view of the financial picture of the Council provides the overall financial context.
- 23 The financial outturn for Cheshire East Council is an overspend of £17.6m. This is net of appropriate allocations to useable reserves. Further detail is provided in **Table 1** and **Annex 1.**
- 24 On 1 April 2024 total Council reserves were £37.8m. The closing balance on 31 March 2025 is £29.6m, this represents an improvement vs forecast of £12.4m. This is partly due to lower drawdowns for services than previously forecast, plus the creation of new reserves as mentioned in paragraph 12 above.
- 25 Capital - The original budget set in February 2024 was £215.8m. During 2024/25 a review was carried out the aim of reducing and reprofiling the amount of capital spend funded by borrowing. At FR3 the forecast spend had reduced to £144.7m. Actual spend for 2024/25 outturn was £88.4m.
- 26 Capital receipts in year amounted to £2.2m against a forecast of £2m, of this £1.2m will be used to fund transformational costs with the remaining £1m supporting the capital financing budget as planned.
- 27 Capital Financing Budget – The impact of funding EFS via Capitalisation Directive/Borrowing over the term of the MTFS are shown in the table below (extract from MTFS Report Feb 2025).

Table 5: Capital Financing Budget - elements	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
Interest Payable – DSG Deficit	5.6	6.4	7.4	7.4
Interest Payable – EFS*	1.0	1.7	1.6	1.6
Interest Payable – Capital Borrowing	13.5	12.8	13.3	13.3
Interest receivable	(2.3)	(2.1)	(2.1)	(2.1)
Total Net Interest	17.8	18.8	20.2	20.2
MRP – EFS*	0.5	1.3	2.1	2.2
MRP – Capital Borrowing	16.7	18.7	19.6	20.8
Total MRP	17.2	20.0	21.7	23.0

Total CFB requirement	35.0	38.8	41.9	43.2
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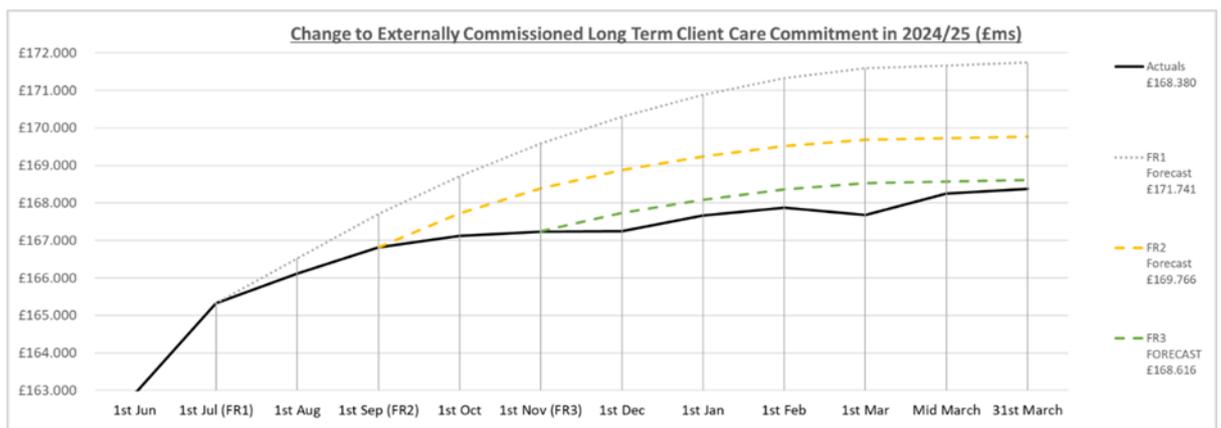
**EFS MRP/Interest above relates to both 2024/25 £17.6m and 2025/26 £25.3m*

- 28 During 2024/25, we undertook a Balance Sheet review through our Treasury Advisors, Arlingclose Ltd. As part of that review, they considered the revenue impact of the current Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) policy currently in place. We asked them to assess our alignment with current Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance. Changes to the Accounting Policy for MRP were set out in the 2025/26 – 2028/29 MTFS against the Capital Financing Budget (Refer to Appendix A, Annex 5, Section 3 of the MTFS – [Approved Feb 2025](#)).
- 29 Changes to the Accounting Policy needed to be made in 2024/25 due to new regulations coming in from 1 April 2025 and therefore have the benefit of reducing the 2024/25 charge to revenue with a betterment to the overall outturn position plus ongoing impacts from 2025/26 onwards have been reflected through the MTFS. In summary the out-turn impact for 2024/25 being is a net improvement of £3.411m.
- 30 There are a number of key issues that have caused the revenue overspend, including:
- Continued demand and complexity of care beyond levels previously identified in Adult’s services;
 - Increasing demands of Children’s Social care, in terms of complexity and the number of cases;
 - Increased borrowing costs associated with the unfunded Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit;
 - Non delivery of some previously agreed savings and/or income targets;
 - The financial impact of investment in transformation and improvement activity over the medium term;
 - Under-recovery of rent allowances;
- 31 In order to mitigate the cost pressure facing the Council, various tasks to urgently review spend and identify additional savings have been undertaken in year through actions led by the Strategic Finance Management Board, which included:
- regular line by line reviews of budgets have been undertaken throughout the year to identify any additional funding or potential areas of underspend.
 - The cessation of any non-essential spend
 - Management of vacancies, particularly agency usage
 - Review of Section 106 legacy budgets
 - Identification of any other areas of discretionary spend including grants awarded, where spend can be reduced or stopped.
 - Review Debt management / overall level of bad debt provision

Specific commentary on the forecast outturn position by Committee

Adults and Health adverse variance of £17.6m

- 32 Throughout 2024/25 the Adults, Health and Integration Directorate has been forecasting an overspend of up to £20m driven by increases in costs of individual placements for people who draw on care and support. This forecast position included mitigations which have been delivered through the year. The final outturn position is an overspend of £17.6m.
- 33 This position represents an improvement on the position that was reported at the Third Financial Review (TFR) of £2.4m. This further improvement results from a number of factors. First, the final outturn for external care costs was slightly lower than the TFR projection as demonstrated in the chart below. As shown in the graph the level of activity between December and March grew at a slower rate than in previous months and was anticipated at the end of quarter 3. At that time there was concern that activity would increase as a result of winter pressures and so a cautious approach was adopted in forecasting the outturn.



- 34 Secondly, smaller favourable variances in other areas have allowed more external care costs than previously anticipated to be funded using eligible external grants. The terms and conditions of these grants allow these costs to be funded if they have been defrayed before the end of the financial year. Finally, income levels continue to exceed earlier expectations for two reasons, income is driven activity and directly related to care costs and the new adoption of a new charging policy adopted in 2024/25.
- 35 This final position provides a secure foundation to build on in 2025/26 and beyond through the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as new transformation projects (e.g. Prevent Reduce, Enable) are brought forward to improve outcomes for service users alongside containing the financial outlay for the Council in responding to ongoing high levels of demand. Although a small amount of the improvement between TFR and the Year End position is of a temporary nature, the outturn position provides greater confidence that the growth for care costs and income which are in the MTFS reflect the adjustment levels needed to re-size the service budget in 2025/26.

Public Health

- 36 There are various factors which have impacted the final position for the Public Health (PH) ringfenced grant reserve movement. Some of this links to additional grant received for PH outcomes, as well as work by the service to manage vacancies and reduce contract costs where possible. The service will continue to work with the wider council services when planning future years' expenditure. This will ensure the best possible VFM is achieved for CEC residents, whilst also ensuring that services funded from the grant continue to meet the statutory ringfenced criteria for PH outcomes. It is important to note that the reserve needs to be sufficient to ensure that when current contracts are re-commissioned they remain affordable, as there is no guarantee that the PH grant allocation will increase to cover cost increases.

Children and Families adverse variance of £3.5m

- 37 At the end of the last financial year the outturn for Children and Families was an overspend of £8.2m. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy included growth to address the pressures that were emerging throughout 2023/24. The costs of children's social care are a concern for many local authorities and not unique to Cheshire East.
- 38 The provisional outturn position for 2024/25 reflects a £3.5m in-year pressure. This is an improvement of £1.9m since the third financial review mainly due to: £0.7m drawdown from reserves to offset the costs relating to flexible capital receipts; £0.2m improved position on catering; £0.2m increase on transport; there was an increase £1.2m in Social Care Cost relating to support accommodation costs but other costs reduced by a similar amount across other placements; use of grants to reduce commissioning cost of children's contracts £0.2m; and reduced staffing cost due to vacancy management and use of grants in Education, Strong Start and Integration (£1.0m).
- 39 The key pressure areas for the directorate include:
- Children's social care placements (£3.4m adverse variance) where the complexity of children in care has continued to increase and the number of children in care has increased from 528 at April 2024 to 550 at March 2025 (compared to a decrease from 586 at April 2023 to 541 at March 2024). Placement costs are increasing by significantly more than inflation and in-year growth is more than projected in the budget, particularly relating to supported accommodation costs.
 - The use and cost of agency staff in children's social care to cover vacancies, sick absence, and maternity leave. The number of staff is greater than the planned establishment to ensure we are able to meet our statutory needs. A review of the staffing structure and establishment gap has been factored into the MTFS for 2025/26.

- Home to school transport costs (£0.5m adverse variance) – where a mix of increasing numbers of pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHCP), and increasing contract costs / direct payment costs.
- Schools Catering (£0.2m adverse variance) – where the costs of the service are above the current charged income level and base budget.

40 These in-year pressures were considered as part of the MTFS for 2025/26. These include:

- Reviewing costs of placements as more detailed reviews are underway focusing on the expected length that some placements may need to be in place for;
- Staffing establishment reviews now scheduled on a 6 weekly basis including a review of agency staff and alternative working;
- Reunification children to be identified with targeted work in place for individual cases;
- Tracking of similar spend across teams to be held in the same place as residential and supported accommodation spend to increase overall grip and understanding;
- Work on Edge of Care Service proposals to identify early intervention that may reduce admissions and costs.

41 Dedicated School Grant (DSG)

For details on DSG please see paragraph 74 below

Corporate Policy favourable variance of £2.2m

42 The Corporate Services Directorate has a net budget of £42.0m for 2024/25 and the final level of spending is £41.9m. Expenditure includes £3.8m on transformation that was not part of the original budget.

43 A number of adjustments have been processed to make an overall reduction to the level of expenditure. They are:

- Contributing to an Insurance Reserve (£0.3m).
- Contributing to an Elections Reserve (£0.3m).
- Creation of an ICT Reserve to assist with change in 2025/26 (£0.3m).
- Funding transformation spend from existing earmarked reserves (£3.1m).

44 As a result, the final outturn is an underspend of £2.2m. The main reasons for the underspend are as follows:

- Vacancy management ~ most services have contributed to a total underspend of £2.3m on staffing budgets from vacant posts, some of which are now filled. This has enabled the service to manage a £0.54m pressure from an MTFs savings target that could not be delivered.
- ICT underspend ~ ICT has delivered a £1.7m underspend. This is mainly due to the expenditure on contracts being lower than expected and a full review of pre-payments.
- Members allowances ~ the budget has underspent by £0.3m.
- Expenditure control ~ tighter control on non-pay spending across the Directorate has achieved savings in most services totalling £0.3m.
- Additional income ~ Registrations Service (£0.5m), Procurement (£0.1m), and Finance (£0.1m) along with additional grant, and court costs income in the Benefits Service (£0.2m).

45 However, these underspends have been offset by the following:

- Rent Allowances ~ under-recovery of £1.5m.
- Transactional Service Centre ~ overspend of £0.3m mainly due to the additional costs of the stabilisation programme which has been put in place to improve the performance of the service and recognises the need to change the way in which Unit4 is used.
- Unavoidable costs ~ External Audit costs, and Bank Charges in Finance of £0.4m.
- Income shortfalls ~ in Project Management Office, Internal Audit, and Legal Services totalling £0.5m.

46 At Third Finance Review (FR3), Corporate Services was forecast to overspend by £2.5m meaning the outturn has improved by £4.7m. The main reasons for such a major change are as follows:

- Transformation ~ forecast costs of £3.7m were included in the FR3 figures. At outturn £3.1m of these costs have been shown as funded from reserve reducing the outturn figure by a corresponding amount.
- ICT shift of £1.1m from contract spend review.
- Establishment Reset ~ after the production of FR3 figures, staffing budgets were re-aligned following an establishment review, and the

impact of backdated pay award became much clearer meaning more accurate staffing forecasts were possible increasing the underspend at outturn by £0.5m.

Place Directorate total favourable variance of £8.6m.

- 47 Overall, the Place Directorate is reporting an underspend of 8.6m at outturn against a £92.2m budget. This represents a £3.7m improvement from FR3.
- 48 The key issues relate to holding vacancies with staffing - expenditure running 16% below budget totalling £5.9m, reduced utility costs of £2.3m and other net changes such as increased income of £0.6m. Previously reported pressures from planning income and waste etc have been managed.

Environment and Communities favourable variance of £1.5m

- 49 Environment and Neighbourhood Services is reporting an underspend of £1.5m against a net budget of £47.8m. This is a £1.9m improvement from FR3. The key reasons for the underspend are £1.6m underspend in the Planning Service comprising underspends in Development Management of £0.5m and Building Control of £0.4m, both mainly due to vacancies. Strategic Planning is £0.7m underspent due to £0.3m vacancies plus £0.3m delayed Local Plan costs. The overall improvement is £0.9m since FR3 due to Improved Planning application income £0.3m, vacancy management £0.4m and additional income/funding £0.1m.
- 50 Environmental Commissioning for ANSA has seen a £0.3m underspend from an increase on the surplus of the core contract, this is an improvement on FR3 of £0.3m. Environmental Commissioning Orbitas is also £0.3m underspent, this is from additional income, which is a £0.1m improvement on income since FR3. Carbon neutral is £0.1m underspent due to recharging staff time to capital schemes, Regulatory Services is a £0.4m underspend, this is £0.3m due to vacancies and £0.1m income, a £0.2m improvement from FR3. Libraries is £0.1m underspent mainly from vacancies and there has been a £0.9m overspend on Leisure Commissioning. This is due to non-delivery of MTFs savings and represents a £0.5m worsening since FR3, due to delayed closure of sites and historic MTFs items. Other services: £0.4m overspend mainly in relation to the HSE fine.

Economy and Growth favourable variance of £5.3m

- 51 The Growth and Enterprise Directorate and Place Directorate are reporting an underspend of £5.3m against a budget of £28.2m. This is £1.5m improvement from FR3.
- 52 The key reasons for the underspend are as follows:
- 53 Facilities Management is underspent by £1.8m, a £0.1m improvement from FR3 due to vacancies. There have been savings against gas and electricity compared to higher budgeted costs of £2.3m and an underspend on Business

rates of £0.3m due to revaluations and appeals. Vacancy management, savings in supplies and additional income have contributed to the underspend by £0.7m. This has been offset by pressures against maintenance budgets of £0.6m; partial achievement of the office estate rationalisation savings target £0.3m, Disrepair claims which is a £0.3m pressure and Water and cleaning costs, a pressure of £0.2m.

- 54 Economic Development is £0.8m underspent, this is as a result of reduced cost of supplies £0.3m, increased income £0.3m and vacancy management £0.2m, this is a £0.2m improvement from FR3. The Housing outturn is £0.7m underspent, due to vacancies and some grant funding, this is a £0.1m improvement from FR3.
- 55 Tatton, Green infrastructure, Cultural Economy and Visitor Economy is £1m underspent, this is a £0.8m improvement from FR3 due to holding vacancies and increasing income.
- 56 The Assets service is underspent by £0.7m, £0.3m is due to vacancies, £0.3m from better income and £0.1m due to a reduction in maintenance spend. The £0.5m improvement from FR3 is mainly from additional income. Farms is underspent by £0.2 due to lower maintenance spend.

Highways and Transport favourable variance of £1.8m

- 57 Transport & Infrastructure is reporting an underspend of £1.8m against a net budget of £16.2m. This is an improvement of £1.3m since FR3.
- 58 The key reasons for the underspend are:
- Car Parking: £0.3m overspend, £0.4m vacancies are offset by reduced car park income £0.7m. This represents a £0.6m worsening since FR3 from reduced income.
 - Strategic Transport is a £1.2m underspend, largely due to vacancies, which represent a £1.1m improvement from FR3, there has also been a delay in new bus contracts taking effect.
 - An underspend of £0.8m across Ansa Transport commissioning, Infrastructure, Highways and Rail Transport Integration due to vacancies.

Finance Sub – Central items

- 59 Finance Sub Committee are reporting a variance of £7.4m, key variances relate to:
- Financing and Investment £1.1m net pressure reflecting £3.0m increased cost of interest payments on borrowing offset by £1.8m increased interest receipts from investments.
 - (£0.2m) additional Flexible Capital Receipts above £1m budgeted.

- Reserves – transfers to / from of £10.6m (net) reflects the following:
 - +£1m reduction in available Capital Financing Reserve at outturn compared to forecast balance reflected in the February 2024 MTFS.
 - (£3.8)m use of the General Fund reserve forecast to fund transformation activities in services in year.
 - +£3.5m Transfer to Reserve as reflected in the 2025/26 MTFS (Forecast Reserves) to fund Transformation delivery in 2025/26.
 - +£5.3m Transfer to Reserve – as noted in paragraph 69 below
 - +£2.1m Transfer to General Fund – as noted in paragraph 69 below
 - +£2.5m new Earmarked Reserves
- As reported in the MTFS 2025/26 approved in February 2025, following a balance sheet review by our Treasury Advisors, Arlingclose Ltd, the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy has been revised and amended with effect from 1 April 2024, bringing it in closer alignment with CIPFA Guidance. The effect of this change has reduced the MRP charge to Revenue in 2024/25 by £3.4m, the ongoing improvement has been reflected in the MTFS/Budget for 2025/26.
- There is a further £1.88m positive variance as a result of in year balance sheet reviews against S106 balances/schemes and bad debt. The S106 Review identifying a one off contribution in year where work has been completed in prior years but has not been reflected in transferring money from S106 into the general fund, a reduction of £0.8m (£0.5m at FR3); £1.08m reduction in the bad debt provision following a review in year of the approach to Adult Social Care debts, further reviews are ongoing for Sundry Debts, the effects of which will be reflected in 2025/26 in year reporting.

Finance Sub – Exceptional Financial Support

- 60 Use of (£17.6m) Exceptional Financial Support – as reported at FR3, the Council proposed to utilise the full £17.6m conditional EFS in 2024/25 to cover the in year adverse overspend in order to protect and minimise the use of reserves. The costs of accepting the EFS support will impact over the medium term. The financing of the use of EFS has been reflected in the MTFS/Budget for 2025/26 (see also para 27).

Companies

- 61 The Council's wholly owned companies' core contract expenditure was £43.7m in 2024/25, relating to services provided at cost for the Council. This position includes £1.1m of additional costs in year, relating to pay award pressures, Household waste recycling closure costs; offset by £1.2m in savings(including a £0.7m rebate on the Core contract), due to a reduction in inflation compared

to budget and reduced tonnages against waste contracts, improvement in the recycling income, improvements against fuel spend, income, staffing vacancies, and other mitigations and efficiencies.

- 62 The net decrease in core contract costs is reflected in the Council's outturn position, mainly against Environment & Communities Committee services, with a net reduction against Highways & Transport Committee functions. The companies rebated £0.7m management fee back to the Council, related to core contract underspend, reflected in the Council's outturn position. In addition, in line with 2024/25 agreed policy proposals £1m of company reserves were returned to the Council as planned plus a further £0.5m agreed in year to assist with the Council's in year position. Both amounts have been reflected in the out-turn position.
- 63 Ansa and Orbitas realised £0.334m in profits (after tax) from commercial activities.

Delivery of the 2024/25 approved budget change items

- 64 Table 6 presents a summary of the final progress on the delivery of the 2024/25 approved budget change items. For items rated as Amber these are for items where there are risks and/or mitigating actions in place. For items rated as red these are for items where services are reporting an adverse variance and there has been an in year non delivery/achievement. New mitigation items have also been included that have come forward since the approval of the MTFs to help the in-year position where identified.
- 65 The green and blue columns show that these budget change items are either delivered or even exceed in some cases. The table below summarises the final progress for the year by Committee.

Table 6: Summary of the final progress on the delivery of the 2024/25 approved budget change items

Committee	Approved Change Budget £m	Outturn £m	Completed £m	Green £m	Amber £m	Red £m	Mitigations £m
Adults & Health	+1.136	+18.707	-2.723	-10.955	-	+33.521	-1.136
Children & Families	+9.909	+13.375	+0.533	-1.001	+0.205	+15.431	-1.793
Corporate Policy	+0.489	-1.759	+0.193	-0.482	-	+1.581	-3.051
Economy & Growth	+3.316	-1.943	-0.061	+1.988	-0.836	+0.940	-3.974
Environment & Communities	-0.052	-1.587	+0.875	-2.012	-0.051	+2.397	-2.796
Finance Sub	-19.667	-12.277	-6.592	-22.583	+10.517	-	+6.381
Highways & Transport	+4.869	+3.084	+2.638	+0.707	+0.820	+0.351	-1.432
TOTAL	0	+17.600	-5.137	-34.338	-10.655	+54.221	-7.801

- 66 A complete list of all approved budget change items, with final progress noted against each item, can be found in **Annex 1, Section 2**.

Revenue Grants for Approval

67 Approvals for Supplementary Revenue Estimates for allocation of additional grant funding are detailed in **Annex 1, Section 3**.

Reserves Position

68 On 1 April 2024, Earmarked Reserves totalled £32.278m and the General Fund Reserve Balance totalled £5.580m. Of the total earmarked reserves, £13.7m has been transferred to the General Fund and £7m has been utilised to support the revenue budget for 2024/25. The General Fund reserves have been partially used to fund Transformation Costs of £3.8m and a contribution has been made to the revenue budget spend in year of £11.7m.

69 Table 7 shows the forecast level of Earmarked and General reserves at the end of 2024/25. This includes the creation of two new reserves :

- (i) an earmarked reserve to cover the one off costs of Transformation in 2025/26 and 2026/27 of **£5.3m** to help mitigate anticipated one off cost impacts of change.
- (ii) a Transfer to General Fund Reserves - **£2.5m** to increase financial resilience into 2025/26 and future years.

70 At outturn, some £2m of Earmarked reserves planned to be spent in 2024/25 have not been fully spent in year and therefore an additional slipped number of Earmarked reserves are being taken forward into 2024/25. There is planned spend in place for these earmarked reserves 2025/26.

71 New Earmarked reserve requests of £2.520m have been approved to fund some specific one-off items in 2025/26.

72 The Council outturn position is reporting £23.322m of earmarked reserves at the end of the financial year (MTFS Feb 2025 forecast £11.5m), of this £3.2m is considered ring-fenced, with special conditions limiting its use. The £11.8m change from the February 2025 forecast mainly reflects additional service requests of £2.6m, cost of transformation (£5.3m) and £3.9m lower than forecast planned use of reserves in year.

Table 7: General and Earmarked Reserves

Committee Reserves	Opening Balance 01 April 2024 £000	Transfers to General Fund £000	Drawdowns in year £000	Carry Forwards £000	New Requests Approved £000	Closing Balance Forecast 31 March 2025 £000
Adults and Health	5,226	(2,857)	9	(9)	835	3,204
Children and Families	1,724	0	(1,724)	0	456	456
Corporate Policy & Central	20,772	(9,276)	(3,878)	(50)	9,714	17,282
Economy and Growth	2,777	(1,008)	(866)	173	320	1,396
Environment and Communities	870	(390)	(328)	330	0	482
Highways and Transport	908	(205)	(215)	14	0	502
Earmarked Reserves Total	32,277	(13,736)	(7,002)	458	11,325	23,322
General Fund Reserve	5,580	2,082	(3,966)	139	2,473	6,308
Total Reserves	37,857	(11,654)	(10,968)	597	13,798	29,630

73 A full list of all earmarked reserves can be found in **Annex 1, Section 5**.

Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve

74 The key pressure on DSG relates to the high needs block where the SEND service continues to see a significant increase in the number of pupils with an EHCPs, and the associated school placement costs.

75 This has placed pressure on the grant used to provide funding for children with SEND in various settings and led to a £31.7m deficit in 2023/24. This adds on to the brought forward deficit of £46.9m to take the DSG Reserve to a £78.6m deficit position at the end of 2023/24. This was an improvement on the budget gap as determined by the Council's DSG Management Plan that was reported to Children and Families Committee in April 2024 and set out the planned expenditure and income on high needs over the medium term. The gap has improved further during 2024/25 with an in-year deficit of £33.5m compared with £41.4m in the management plan. The overall deficit is £112.1m at the end of the year. Please note this includes an underspend on early years of £1.6m that is expected to be recouped in 2025/26.

Table 8 Dedicated Schools Grant

Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit	£m
Deficit Balance Brought forward	78.6
Additional In-year Pressures	33.5

Debt

- 76 Sundry debt includes all invoiced income due to the Council except for statutory taxes (Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates). The balance of outstanding debt at 31 March 2025 was £18.5m. This has increased by £1.6m since FR3 (end of November 2024).
- 77 Annually, the Council raises invoices with a total value of over £95m. Around 40% of the Council's overall sundry debt portfolio relates to charges for Adult Social Care, the remainder being spread across a range of functions including Highways, Property Services, Licensing and Building Control.
- 78 The Revenue Recovery team (using their experience gained in collecting Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates) engage with services to offer advice and assistance in all aspects of debt management, including facilitating access to debt collection services (currently provided by Bristow & Sutor).
- 79 The total amount of service debt over six months old is £11.9m; split as £10.5m of Adult Social Care debt and £1.4m of Sundry Debt. A provision of £6.1m was made at year ended 31 March 2025 to cover doubtful debt in the event that it needs to be written off. There has been an in year review of the Bad Debt provision which has to date focused on Adult Social Care debt. This has led to a reduction in the provision of £0.7m in the current year. Further work is planned for a review of debt across other service areas in 2025/26.
- 80 The level of Adult Social Care debt can fluctuate depending on when in the month the snapshot is taken, for example if it is before or after the Direct Debit income is received and allocated. The debt also has different levels of risk depending on the type of debt. For example, around £3.5m is linked to deferred arrangements which is debt that is secured on property or assets, and therefore carries a low risk. There is also around £9.4m of debt which is deemed to be lower risk as its linked to areas such as probate, property sales or deputyship.
- 81 The Highways position for outstanding debt is consistent throughout the year. The debt is generally made up of three elements: the movement of funds from Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Borough Council in relation to the Cheshire Road Safety Group (these are settled quickly); third party claims for damage to the highway; and permit fees. The third party claims are often paid in instalments.
- 82 The previous outturn positions are:
- 31 March 2025 Outstanding debt £2.2m, over 6 months old £0.6m.
 - 31 March 2024 Outstanding debt £1.6m, over 6 months old £0.7m

- 83 The Council has robust processes in place to ensure that all outstanding debt is chased up (where commercially viable) and, where necessary, payment plans are put in place with advice from Legal Services.

Table 9 – Debt Summary as at 31 March 2025

2024/25

DEBT SUMMARY as at 31st March 2025

	Outstanding Debt £000			Over 6 months old £000		
	FR3	Outturn	Increase / (Decrease)	FR3	Outturn	Increase / (Decrease)
Adults and Health Committee						
Adults, Public Health and Communities	14,170	15,219	1,049	9,325	10,556	1,230
Children and Families Committee						
Children's Social Care (Incl. Directorate)	189	247	58	1	1	(0)
Prevention and Early Help	51	70	20	(8)	(8)	1
Schools	17	4	(14)	3	1	(2)
Highways and Transport Committee						
Highways and Infrastructure	1,305	1,499	194	755	626	(129)
Economy and Growth Committee						
Growth and Enterprise	621	666	45	420	375	(45)
Environment and Communities Committee						
Environment and Neighbourhood Services	377	293	(84)	214	243	29
Corporate Policy Committee						
Finance and Customer Services	126	175	49	67	86	19
Governance and Compliance	0	2	2	-	0	0
Human Resources	-	89	89	-	-	-
ICT	3	228	224	2	0	(2)
Total	16,859	18,491	1,632	10,780	11,881	1,101

Council Tax and Business Rates

Council Tax

- 84 **Table 10** details each precepting authorities share of the budgeted collectable rates income.

Table 10	Band D	Collectable
Share of Council Tax Collectable Rates	Charge	Rates
		£m
Cheshire East Council	1,792.59	287.1
Town and Parish Councils	71.57	11.5
Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner	262.94	42.1
Cheshire Fire Authority	90.09	14.4
Total	2,217.19	355.1

- 85 The collectable rates valuation is based on the assumption that of the total amount billed, at least 99% will be collected. Table 11 demonstrates that, excluding a slight reduction during the Covid-19 pandemic, the target to collect at least 99% of Council Tax within three years continues to be achieved.

Table 11 Council Tax Collection Rates	2020/21 %	2021/22 %	2022/23 %	2023/24 %	2024/25 %
After 1 year	97.4	97.8	98.2	98.0	*97.8
After 2 years	98.6	98.5	98.8	98.6	**
After 3 years	98.9	99.0	99.1	**	**

** Data is not yet available.

- 86 After accounting adjustments, the Council Tax Collection Fund position at outturn was a £0.420m surplus for 2024/25, of which, £0.353m is attributable to Cheshire East Council. This is a £0.347m improvement to the declared surplus of £0.73m from January 2025 and will be held in the Collection Fund Adjustment Account until January 2026, when a revised declaration to take this final position into account can be made.

Non-Domestic Rates (NDR)

- 87 Collectable rates are distributed between Cheshire East Council (49%), Cheshire Fire Authority (1%), and Central Government (50%).
- 88 Non-domestic Rates valuations for 2024/25 were set out in the NNDR1 return to Central Government in January 2024. Any variance to this forecast is included in the following years' NNDR1 return and any gain or loss will be recovered in 2025/26. The total Net Rates Payable into the Collection Fund was forecast at £155.7m.
- 89 **Table 12** demonstrates that the target to collect at least 99% of Non-Domestic Rates within three years continues to be achieved.

Table 12 Non-Domestic Collection Rates	2020/21 %	2021/22 %	2022/23 %	2023/24 %	2024/25 %
After 1 year	92.4	95.6	98.2	97.7	97.9
After 2 years	97.4	98.3	98.8	99.0	**
After 3 years	99.0	99.2	99.4	**	**

** Data is not yet available.

- 90 After accounting adjustments, the Non-Domestic Rates Collection Fund is out-turning a final deficit of £2.288m for 2024/25, of which, £1.121m is attributable to Cheshire East Council. This deficit is £0.238m more than the declared deficit of £2.050m from January 2025 and will be held in the Collection Fund Adjustment Account until January 2026 when a revised declaration to take this final position into account can be made.

Treasury Management Strategy update

- 91 Treasury Management income for 2024/25 is £3.3m which is higher than the budgeted £1.9m. However, borrowing costs are also higher than budgeted at £18.9m compared to budget of £16.1m. The net additional

financing costs (borrowing less investment interest) is therefore £1.4m in excess of that budgeted.

- 92 Interest rates have seen substantial rises over the last 3 years which has significantly increased the cost of borrowing. Borrowing costs have begun to fall and the expectation is that they will continue to fall although market uncertainty may impact on the timing of future reductions.
- 93 The cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities has generally followed Base Rate over the year. However, liquidity in the market from October onwards caused rates to increase disproportionately compared to underlying Base Rates. The Council's application for Exceptional Financial Support also reduced the credit quality of the Council to some lenders which exacerbated the shortage of liquidity available. As a result some PWLB borrowing was undertaken with a mix of 1-2 year maturity loans and 2-3 year Equal Instalments of Principal (EIP) repayment loans. The average rate payable on these loans is 4.84%. This provides some surety of cost at lower rates than we could otherwise have achieved at the time and reduces over-reliance on short term borrowing. The relatively short period of these PWLB loans should provide opportunities to refinance at lower cost if rates fall in line with expectations.
- 94 The cost of short term borrowing in 2024/25 is 5.29% which is an increase from 4.82% in 2023/24. The average rate paid on all borrowing was 5.03%.

Investment Strategy

- 95 There have not been any material changes to the Investment Strategy since that reported at in the MTFS for 2025/26 – 2028/29 in Feb 2025, see link [APPENDIX A MTFS 2025-26 to 2028-29 FINAL](#). Annex 1, Section 7 to this report includes updates to the Investment Strategy indicators for 2024/25 out-turn where available.

Consultation and Engagement

- 96 The annual business planning process involves engagement with local people and organisations. Local authorities have a statutory duty to consult on their budget with certain stakeholder groups including the Schools Forum and businesses. In addition, the Council chooses to consult with other stakeholder groups. The Council continues to carry out stakeholder analysis to identify the different groups involved in the budget setting process, what information they need from us, the information we currently provide these groups with, and where we can improve our engagement process.
-

- 97 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy has been developed during 2024 and an online budget engagement survey was published on 19 December 2024.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 98 The recommendations in this report support the 'Reporting' element of the financial cycle.
- 99 The overall process for managing the Council's resources focuses on value for money, good governance, and stewardship. The approach to these responsibilities is captured in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Financial changes take place during the year and are authorised in line with the Constitution. This report sets out where further approvals are required.
- 100 This report provides strong links between the Council's statutory reporting requirements and the in-year monitoring processes for financial and non-financial management of resources.
- 101 Outturn reporting provides an opportunity to check performance and management of risks against the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The four-year MTFS is approved by Council, but risks were identified as part of this process which will require access to reserves and exceptional financial support. Members had regard to such risks as the deficit in Dedicated School Grant reserves and potential liabilities associated with the Extra Care Housing PFI (Private Finance Initiative) Scheme when approving the budget.

Other Options Considered

- 102 Outturn reporting could be delayed until post audit, to avoid the risk of provisional figures changing. This is not a recommended option as the audit completion certificate is not expected until February 2026. Delaying the reporting element of the financial cycle minimises the ability to react to issues during in-year monitoring. Provisional reporting has historically been accurate, so it is appropriate to react to the financial information provided in this report.
- 103 General Reserves are used to manage risk, in accordance with the Reserves Strategy. In the Planning cycle for the 2026/27 MTFS members will have to re-consider the robustness of all estimates and the overall adequacy of reserves based on up-to-date information and forecasts, which will include a review of the level of General Reserves.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 104 The Finance Sub-Committee has responsibility for oversight of the Council's budget and treasury management responsibilities and therefore the recommendations fall within its remit. Its approval of the supplementary estimates and virements follows the Budget and Policy Framework Rules and it is recommended that each committee also approves them.²
- 105 The legal implications surrounding the process of setting the 2025 to 2029 Medium-Term Financial Strategy were dealt with in the reports relating to that process. The purpose of this paper is to provide a progress report at the final outturn stage in 2024/25.
- 106 Other implications arising directly from this report relate to the internal processes of approving supplementary revenue estimates, supplementary capital estimates and virements referred to above which are governed by the Finance Procedure Rules.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 107 The Council's financial resources are agreed by Council and aligned to the achievement of stated outcomes for residents and communities. Monitoring and managing performance help to ensure that resources are used effectively, and that business planning and financial decision making are made in the right context.
- 108 The Council's Audit & Governance Committee is responsible for reviewing and analysing the Council's audited position at year-end. Final Group Accounts are due for approval by February 2026 following public scrutiny, external auditing, and any associated recommendations to the Committee.
- 109 The forecast outturn for 2024/25, as reported within the MTFs, was used to inform the budget setting process for 2025/26. Analysis of the final outturn helps to inform the Council of potential issues arising for the 2025/26 budget or highlights potential underlying issues that can be managed in future budget setting cycles.
- 110 At this stage further work is underway to identify whether the variations reported at outturn will form a significant risk to the 2025/26 budget.

Human Resources

- 111 This report is a backward look at Council activities at outturn and states the year end position. Any HR implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.
-

Risk Management

112 Financial risks are assessed and reported on a regular basis, and remedial action taken if required. Risks associated with the achievement of the 2024/25 budget and the level of general reserves were factored into the financial scenario, budget, and reserves strategy.

Impact on other Committees

113 All Committees will receive this Outturn report.

Policy

114 This report is a backward look at Council activities during the final quarter.

115 The final outturn position, ongoing considerations for future years, and the impact on general reserves will be fed into the assumptions underpinning the 2026-30 Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

116 Any equality implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
Statutory Officer (or deputy):			
Adele Taylor	S151 Officer	12/05/2025	14/05/2025
Janet Witkowski	Acting Monitoring Officer	14/05/2025	22/05/2025
Other Consultees:			
Executive Directors/Directors:			
CLT		07/05/2025	

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Executive Director of Resources (s151 Officer) Sal Khan, Interim Head of Finance & Deputy Chief Finance Officer sal.khan@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Annex 1 – Final Outturn 2024/25 Annex 2 - Grants Register Annex 3 - Capital Programme
Background Papers:	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-28 First Financial Review 2024/25 Second Financial Review 2024/25 Third Financial Review 2024/25

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ANNEX 1



Outturn 2024/25

Results to end of March 2025

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Section 1: 2024/25 Final Outturn

1.1. Table 1 provides a service summary of financial performance. The final outturn position shows that services were £10.2m over budget 2024/25.

1.2. It also shows that central budgets were £7.4m above budget resulting in an overall outturn of £17.6m overspend against a net revenue budget of £364.5m.

Table 1 Outturn 2024/25	Revised Budget (NET)	Outturn	Variance	Forecast Variance FR3	Movement from FR3 to Outturn
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Service Committee					
Adults and Health	137.1	154.7	17.6	20.0	(2.4)
Children and Families	92.6	96.1	3.5	5.4	(1.9)
Corporate Policy	44.2	41.9	(2.2)	2.5	(4.7)
Economy and Growth	27.9	22.7	(5.3)	(3.8)	(1.5)
Environment and Communities	47.8	46.3	(1.5)	(0.6)	(0.9)
Highways and Transport	16.2	14.4	(1.8)	(0.5)	(1.3)
TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE	365.8	376.0	10.2	22.9	(12.7)
Finance Sub:					
Central Budgets	25.0	32.4	7.4	(4.6)	12.0
Funding	(390.8)	(390.8)	(0.0)	-	(0.0)
TOTAL FINANCE SUB	(0.0)	17.6	17.6	18.3	(0.7)
Exceptional Financial Support	-	(17.6)	(17.6)	(17.6)	-
GRAND TOTAL	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	0.7	(0.7)

1.3. The outturn position reflects the following :

- Includes those savings that have been identified as non-achievable though the tracker on our High Level Business Cases (HLBC) with no/some alternative actions currently presented;
- A review of the on-going impacts of adverse variances identified in 2023/24;
- Any identified, emerging items of significance:
 - Within Adult Social Care, significant growth is forecast for care costs in line with position seen year to date, less mitigations linked to delivery of savings;
 - Includes the assumptions around additional revenue resources in Childrens Services to resource the draft improvement plan in relation to the recent OFSTED inspection;
- Impact of the confirmed increased 2024/25 pay award £1.6m (unfunded);

- Detailed review of any vacancy underspends in all areas;
- One-off items that have been identified so far through line by line reviews and/or identification of additional funding that has been announced since the MTFS was set.
- Mitigation activities delivered or forecast to be delivered by 31 March as reflected in paragraph 28 of the main covering report.
- Review of Section 106 legacy budgets, the effects of which are partly reflected in the FR3 forecast out-turn as a one off contributions to reserves work undertaken to date has identified an improvement (reduction) of the Council's bad debt provision of £1.0m,
- Changes to the MRP Policy following a Balance Sheet review through our Treasury Management advisors, Arlingclose Ltd, during 2024/25 reduced the in year charge to revenue by £3.4m.

1.4. Further items impacting on the level of the Council's balances are detailed in Section 5.

Section 2: 2024/25 Approved Budget Change Items

The following table provides detailed commentary on the outturn against the approved budget change items that were agreed as part of the budget agreed in February 2024. These are split by relevant committee.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Adults and Health Committee	+1.136	+18.707	+17.571	
1	Fees and Charges	-1.800	-1.800	0	Green – see below
2	Client Contributions	-0.800	-6.122	-5.322	Green - £5.322m surplus vs client contribution in 2024/25. This is in addition to achieving the budgeted increase for Fees and Charges & Client Contribution increase in-year (£2.6m)
3	Working Age Adults - Prevent, Reduce, Delay	-1.467	-1.467	0	Green – Delivered
4	Older People – Prevent, Reduce, Delay	-1.566	-1.566	0	Green - Delivered
5	Market Sustainability and Workforce grant	-1.100	-1.100	0	Completed
6	Revenue grants for Adult Social Care	-2.480	-2.480	0	Completed
7	Pension Costs Adjustment	-0.493	-0.493	0	Completed
8	Investment in Adult Social Care	+7.600	+31.417	+23.817	Red – MTFS growth for Care Costs not sufficient to cover the pressure seen in 2023/24 plus the expected growth in 2024/25. Mitigations to reduce pressure reported separately.
9	Pay Inflation	+1.892	+2.104	+0.212	Red – Actual cost of NJC Pay increase in 2024/25 exceeded budget growth in the 2024/25 MTFS.
10	Resettlement Revenue Grants – reversal of 2023/24 use	+0.850*	+0.850*	0	Completed
11	Adult Social Care Transformation Earmarked Reserve Release – reversal of 2023/24 use	+0.500*	+0.500*	0	Completed
12	Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care – Removal of Grant Income	-	-	-	Completed - Now a 2025/26 Item
13	Asset Management	TBC	TBC	-	Green - The business case for future usage of the site will be revisited and taken through the appropriate CEC

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					governance procedures. The model of care in relation to high-cost adult social care and health provisions will be part of this work.
14	Investigate potential agency creation	TBC	TBC	-	Green - This proposal has been consistently delivered in relation to the usage of a Care Workers agency in all but name. Care4CE, the Council's in house care provider, has been utilising workers, both casual and agency, as a bank of workers for several years to successfully deliver operational requirements.
In year	Other variances to reconcile to 2024/25 Outturn position	0	+1.688	+1.688	
In year	Mitigations reducing the Outturn reported position	0	-2.824	-2.824	

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MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets (some of the budget change items have been separated out since the publication of the MTFS)	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Children and Families Committee	+9.909	+13.375	+3.466	
15	Discretionary offer to children with disabilities	-0.900	-0.979	-0.079	Green - On Track, project team progressing multiple improvements to redesign the service offer, ensuring consistency and efficiency.
16	Remove school catering subsidy	-0.516	-0.282	+0.234	Red – Catering service ended on 31 March. A rate uplift applied from September 2024 in order to cover the costs of the service through to the end of March 2025. Some schools managed their own arrangements before the end of the financial year, impacting on the savings target.
17	Review of structure to further integrate children and families services	-1.000	-0.200	+0.800	Red - Delivery Planning in progress to address saving. Including: further Establishment review, service redesign, cross directorate risk management.
18	Reduce discretionary Post-16 Travel Support	-0.400	-0.367	+0.033	Red - Agreed by Committee
19	Achieve the Family Hub model	-0.250	-0.250	0	Green - Committee approved new model of delivery in Nov Committee. Savings are not going to be delivered in 2024/25 therefore alternative saving being found to cover this.
20a	Other Service Reviews – Review of commissioned services across the C&F directorate. Review of the current Domestic Abuse Service	-0.100	-0.100	0	Completed – Grant income.
20b	Other Service Reviews – Maximise grant allocation to cover all costs	-0.100	0	+0.100	Red - Plan to explore current / future grants to ensure where T&Cs allow, contribution to fund base costs (e.g. staffing and on costs) is maximised.
20c	Other Service Reviews – Traded services	-0.050	+0.010	+0.060	Red - Part delivered. One off savings in other service areas cover the remainder.
21a	Reduce Growth in expenditure – review of high cost, low outcome external residential placements	-1.000	-1.000	0	Red - Whilst work has been taking place to open CE Children's Homes and our first open is now open, with our second due in spring, our collaboration with Foster4 working well to increase our foster carers, we still are seeing more children coming into care. There is also increasing instability with the residential market, driving up prices. Complex young people need high packages of support, which are extremely expensive. We are due to review all

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					high cost placements and other placements to identify children for whom reunification to family would be appropriate. Processes are also in place by the Head of Provider Services to review costs being paid to providers. Merged overspend on ref. 30.
21b	Reduce Growth in expenditure – increase commissioning approach to establish greater opportunities to provide accommodation for +16 young people	-0.400	+1.561	+1.961	Red - 16+ and 18+ Commissioning Plans / Market Shaping in Progress. Responding to increasing demand and complexity.
21c	Reduce Growth in expenditure – Foster Care	-0.250	-0.250	0	Green - A Delivery Plan to increase Foster Care provision.
21d	Reduce Growth in expenditure – reduced spend on expert assessment in court proceedings and services post public law proceedings	-0.250	-0.527	-0.277	Green - Task & Finish Group put in place to explore and develop processes and capacity to reduce costly legal proceedings.
22	Pension Costs Adjustment	-0.515	-0.432	+0.083	Red - Teacher's pension legacy costs are not reducing as anticipated. Completed - CEC pension reduction.
23	Growth to deliver statutory Youth Justice service, and growth to ensure budget is sufficient to meet Safeguarding Partnership duties	+0.170	+0.205	+0.035	Amber - It is incumbent upon the three statutory safeguarding partners, the police, health and the Local Authority, to ensure that adequate funding is allocated to the Children's Safeguarding Partnership so it can fulfil its statutory functions in delivering the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. An internal audit identified the Local Authority had not reviewed its contributions to the partnership and was insufficiently contributing to the delivery of the partnership arrangements. As a result, growth was approved by committee. This has been supported by an increase in contributions from all partner agencies. A vacancy has also been held in the business unit.
24	Growth to provide capacity to deliver transformation for SEND	+0.500	+0.235	-0.265	Green.
25	Wraparound Childcare Programme (funded)	+0.587	+0.587	0	Amber - Currently reviewing sufficiency and funding details to manage delivery within budget.

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25	Wraparound Childcare Programme (funded)	-0.587	-0.587	0	Amber - Currently reviewing sufficiency and funding details to manage delivery within budget.
26	Legal Proceeding - Child Protection	+0.770	+0.770	0	Green.
27	Growth in School Transport budget	+0.936	+1.359	+0.423	Red.
28	Pay Inflation	+1.374	+1.915	+0.541	Red - NJC Pay Claim now approved - over spend against budget as a result of £1,290/2.5% increase. Increase compared to flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS.
29	Use of Children & Families Transformation Reserve – reversal of 2023/24 use	+1.065*	+1.065*	0	Completed.
30	Growth in Childrens Placement costs	+10.825	+12.435	+1.610	Red - Closely monitored throughout the year to ensure that funding is sufficient to meet demand and complexity.
31	Revenue costs for the Crewe Youth Zone (as above) aligned to Supporting Families Funding	-	-	-	Green.
31	Early Help budget to support funding towards the Crewe Youth Zone	-	-	-	Green.
32	SEND Capital Modification	TBC	TBC	-	Amber - Contingent upon wider asset management and associated timelines. Extensive work underway to plan and progress development opportunities. Captured as part of the Capital Program reported to Committee.
33	Childrens Social Work Bank	TBC	TBC	-	Red - Various options currently being explored as part of wider C&F Establishment review and potential peripatetic resource options.
34	Safe Walking Routes to School	TBC	TBC	-	Green - Features as part of School Transport Programme.
35	Withdrawal of the CEC School Meals Service	TBC	TBC	-	Green - Features as part of School Catering subsidy project - CF2428-16.
In year	Outturn variance Education, Strong Start and Integration	0	-1.951	-1.951	Underspend relates to vacancy management, reduced spend, use of grants and income generation across services.
In year	Outturn variance Children and Families Directorate	0	+0.292	+0.292	Overspend relates to external Quality Assurance Agency costs and cost of establishment.

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In year	Outturn variance Children's Social Care	0	+0.006	+0.006	Overspend relating to staffing costs offset by flexible capital receipts.
In year	Outturn variance Quality Assurance, Commissioning and Partnerships	0	-0.140	-0.140	Underspend relates to additional income.

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	Corporate Policy Committee	+0.489	-1.759	-2.248	
36	Reduce leadership and management costs	-0.540	-	+0.540	Red - The feedback from the DMA review is that senior management vacancies will require recruitment to in order to complete the complement of Corporate Managers. In year vacancy savings will continue but will be time limited. There is potential to increase costs by additional management support during transformation. This will result in increased budget pressure. This pressure is being mitigated through the four in-year items at the end of this table. Most of those will be permanent and used to deliver this saving.
37	Close the Emergency Assistance Scheme	-0.220	-0.220	0	Completed
38	Reduce election costs and increase charges where possible	-0.150	-0.150	0	Green - The proposal is to make a payment during 2024/25 of £70k-£80k from the existing election account, as part of this one-off saving. The remainder will be delivered by reducing the sum which would normally be paid into the election reserve. This might be mitigated in the year of the next local elections by monies which will be raised by charging town and parish councils for their elections in 2027. However, this will not be sufficient and will be likely to lead to the need for a supplementary estimate.
39a	Accelerate Digital Transformation (ICT Operational efficiencies)	-0.100	-0.100	0	Green – third party costs have been reduced and there are plans to reduce further during the year.
39b	Accelerate Digital (Digital efficiencies)	-0.150	-0.150	0	Green – Removal of temporary budget for Solutions Architect Resource, now covered by an Earmarked Reserve.
40	Enforce prompt debt recovery and increase charges for costs	-0.150	-0.150	0	Completed - The award of costs is a matter for the Magistrates at each court hearing. However, only by exception will they vary from the level already agreed by us with the Court Manager. The approach to the Court Manager has been made and the revised level agreed. The action is therefore complete, but the financial benefits will accrue as we continue

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					the regular recovery process during the year.
41a	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – School Subsidy (ICT)	-0.032	-0.032	-0.000	Green. ICT will not be offering services to schools in the 2025/26 academic year.
41b	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – Organisational Development	-0.100	-0.100	0	Completed
41c	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – Registration Services	-0.050	-0.050	0	Green
41d	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – School Subsidy	-0.018	0	+0.018	Amber - Part of the £50k School Subsidy saving - Finance team to assist in identifying options. These are listed at the end of the table.
41e	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services	-0.010	0	+0.010	Amber - Finance team to assist in identifying options. These are listed at the end of the table.
41f	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – Printing	-0.050	0	+0.050	Amber - Finance team to assist in identifying options. These are listed at the end of the table.
41g	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – Hybrid working / mileage	-0.050	0	+0.050	Amber – Options being considered regarding reduced travel spend including ensuring efficient planning around meeting attendance and minimising unnecessary movements across the area. This maximises efficient use of time as well for teams.
42	Pension Costs Adjustment	-0.378	-0.378	0	Completed
43	Mitigation of reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant	+0.136	+0.136	0	Completed
44	Pay Inflation	+1.446	+1.581	+0.135	Red - NJC Pay Claim now approved - over spend against budget as a result of £1,290/2.5% increase. Increase compared to flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS.
45	Legal Services Capacity	+0.455	+0.455	0	Completed
46	ICT Review 1	+0.450	+0.450	0	Completed - The move to Software as a Service has necessitated the transfer from Capital to Revenue budget requirements. The Shared Service continues to reduce third party costs and agency spend as per the Business case.

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47	Workforce Strategy Review	TBC	-	-	Completed - There are no savings attributed to this area in 2024/2025. Opportunities to explore workforce options are being considered alongside transformation work. Any savings are likely to be realised in 2025/26 at the earliest. It is recommended that this item is removed from the list.
In year	Recognising the increased level of Registration service income of £350k.	0	-0.350	-0.350	This will be a permanent change to deliver the Red ranked items above.
In year	Recognising the receipt of £45k of Police and Crime Commissioner grant income.	0	-0.045	-0.045	This will be a permanent change to deliver the Red / Amber ranked items above.
In year	Taking the underspend on phones in corporate services (mobiles and rental) compared to budget.	0	-0.060	-0.060	This will be a permanent change to deliver the Red / Amber ranked items above.
In year	Adjustment required to balance to Outturn position of -£2,249k for corporate including ICT.	0	-2.496	-2.496	This figure is a mix of permanent and temporary items to assist the in-year position.
In-year	Reduce Members Allowances budget for excess budget relating to a pay award that was not taken	0	-0.100	-0.100	This will be a permanent change to deliver the Red / Amber ranked items above.

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	Economy and Growth Committee	+3.316	-1.943	-5.259	
49	Service Restructures within Place based Services	-0.787	-0.368	+0.419	Amber – achievement through permanent savings remains challenging without a full restructure. Mitigation is through offset of underspend 'in year' and proposals are to be considered to offset permanently.
50	Reduce opening hours for main offices	-0.050	-0.050	0	Completed
51	Office estate rationalisation	-0.550	-0.440	+0.110	Amber - due to the timeline for the transfer of buildings being extended. This item is being mitigated by in year savings and by the items at the end of the table which are a mix of permanent and temporary measures.
52	Tatton Park	-0.046	-0.046	0	Amber - Savings can be achieved through investment in the Tatton Vision Programme. To date this programme has achieved cumulative MTFS savings of £624k. Amber rating reflects the fact that the Tatton Vision capital programme was under review and so progress delayed.
53	Transfer of Congleton Visitor Information Centre	-0.020	-0.020	0	Green - Transfer of Congleton VIC to the Town Council has already occurred.
54	Pension costs adjustment	-0.157	-0.157	0	Completed
55	Tatton Park ticketing and electronic point of sale (EPOS) upgrade	+0.005	+0.005	0	Green - A procurement process is currently underway to source a supplier who can ensure onsite and web-based delivery of a new system which aligns with present and future needs. Improved functionality should enable future savings delivery.
56c	West Park collection	+0.012	+0.012	0	Green - Cost for vital conservation and storage of West Park Museum collections and ongoing temporary storage requirements.
56d	CEC archives	+0.008	0	-0.008	Amber - Timescales for implementation of the Archives capital project have slipped due to grant funding decisions, with revised opening date of Spring 2026.
57	Property Information and Management System - Estates – Revenue Adjustment	+0.030	+0.031	+0.001	Completed
58	Housing	+0.035	+0.035	0	Green - Consultation on the Housing Restructure commenced 22 May and

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					includes the post that the funding is attributed to. The new structure was implemented on 1 August 2024.
59	Environmental Hub Waste Transfer Station	+0.040	+0.040	0	Green - Project on track delivery Q1/2. The replacement of bay 1 in the Councils Environmental Hub Residual Waste Transfer Station building with a new design more likely to provide long-term resilience to wear and tear, to enable the continuation of waste processing at the transfer station.
60	Rural and Visitor Economy	+0.045	+0.045	0	Green - Additional revenue support is required to cover the increase in electricity charges for the Rural and Culture Economy Service to maintain existing service provision at Tatton Park and Countryside sites.
61	Minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) - Estates - Revenue Adjustment	+0.079	+0.018	-0.061	Amber – Prioritised negotiations with 3rd parties/tenants occupying premises being expedited to avoid delays on obtaining access for surveys, completing necessary improvement works and legally completing lease renewals.
62	Public Rights of Way Income Realignment	+0.115	+0.115	0	Completed. Adjustments made to budget forecasts 2024/25
63	Pay inflation	+0.788	+0.940	+0.152	Red - NJC Pay Claim now approved - over spend against budget as a result of £1,290/2.5% increase. Increase compared to flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS. This item is being mitigated by the items at the end of the table which are a mix of permanent and temporary measures.
64	Crewe town centre maintenance and operation	+0.650	+0.579	-0.071	Green – Delays in completing some projects in 2024-25. Expenditure is expected in 2025-26
65	Assets - Buildings and Operational	+3.119	+1.292	-1.827	Green - Growth for Energy was not fully utilised as it was calculated when energy markets prices were incredibly high, together with significant increased inflation– the market has subdued since then and prices have stabilised, this has been adjusted for in 25/26. There were also some credits received in year due to over performance on Energy contracts. Business rates remain a challenge to predict due to revaluation, appeals and complex transitional relief calculations, this along with some one-off rebates meant there was an underspend in this area.

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					The growth increase provided for revenue maintenance has enabled existing budgets to offset the inflation factors that were applied to the contract prices, and this was fully utilised with a pressure at yearend
66	Landfill Site Assessments revenue adjustment - Estates – CE Owned Landfill sites (53 sites) Review and Risk Assessment completions	-	-	-	Amber - £10k cost growth in for 25/26. Second stage of the review to commence shortly. Internal capacity within Environmental Services to be identified.
67	Tatton Park Estate Dwellings Refurbishment	-	-	-	Completed - Provision for response maintenance issues for 8 onsite dwellings to ensure properties meet standards required as part of tenancy agreements and the National Trust lease.
68	Improving Crewe Rented Housing Standards	-	-	-	Green
In year	Growth & Enterprise 2024/25 mitigations to balance back to outturn position	0	-3.305	-3.305	
In year	Place Directorate 2024/25 mitigations to balance back to outturn position	0	-0.669	-0.669	

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	Environment and Communities Committee	-0.052	-1.587	-1.535	
69	Refresh wholly owned company overheads and contributions	-1.000	-1.500	-0.500	Green - ASDV Review recommendations have now been approved in full by Finance Sub-Committee in their role as shareholder of the wholly owned companies. The process of insourcing these services is largely completed which has released the reserves in year to meet this one-off contribution.
70	Strategic Leisure Review (Stage 2)	-1.305	-0.526	+0.779	Amber - Initial savings secured via committee decision on 11th March 2024. Proposals are being developed with EHL and town and parish councils to secure the residual £250k amount (£56k of this achieved through removal of car park refunds) - dialogue is ongoing. Delays to disposing of Middlewich and Holmes Chapel Leisure Centres in year are having a negative impact on savings position. Covid insurance contribution from EHL not secured.
71	Mitigate the impact of contract inflation and tonnage growth	-0.490	-0.490	0	Completed - Mitigate the impact of contract inflation and tonnage growth.
72	Emergency reduction of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) to four core sites	-0.263	-0.200	+0.063	Amber - Full saving on basis of original HLBC was not achieved due to introduction of mobile provision offer as a result of Full Council decision and costs associated with trial of booking system.
73	Libraries Strategy	-0.365	-0.138	+0.227	Green - Committee approval to implement final Strategy secured on 27th November, revised opening hours at Tier 3 sites went live from January 2025 and Tier 2 sites as of 1st April 2025. Staffing levels yet to be reduced with staff consultations due to be launched in 2025-26 relating to restructure of service. Engagement with Town and Parish Councils undertaken to shape the Strategy proposals and seek funding contributions, due to a delay with legal agreements only Bollington was secured for 2024-25. Progress has been made with preparing legal agreements for 2025-26. As part of funding libraries in a

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					different way, libraries have increased income from meeting room hire and fees/charges
74	Reduce costs of street cleansing operations	-0.200	-0.200	0	Green - Value of saving now reduced from ANSA Management Fee for 2024/25, fully achieved in 24-25 due to removal of any vacancies and under-utilised fleet.
75	Reduce revenue impact of carbon reduction capital schemes	-0.336	0	+0.336	Amber – Carbon Neutral Council target deferred from 2025 to 27, as agreed at Full Council on 27.02.24, large scale prudential borrowing funded schemes spend now reprofiled to suit, however budget not sat within E&C Committee. Discussion with Corporate Financing team to re-allocate. This item is being partly mitigated by the item at the end of the table which is a mix of permanent and temporary measures.
76	Increase Garden Waste charges to recover costs	-0.045	-0.045	0	Green – Increase Garden Waste charges for the calendar year 2025 to recover costs
77	MTFS 80 (Feb 23) – Waste Disposal – Contract Inflation and Tonnage Growth (updated forecast)	+3.577	+3.577	0	Green – rating due to fluctuations in waste markets relating to recyclates and continued levels of inflation, outside CEC control and not aligned to projections. Outturn 24-25 witnessed a reduction in inflationary costs and an improved basket of goods rate that fully mitigated the pressure identified mid-year.
78	Pay Inflation – CEC & ASDV	+1.861	+2.397	+0.536	Red - NJC Pay Claim now approved - over spend against budget as a result of £1,290/2.5% increase. Increase compared to flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS. This item is being partly mitigated by the item at the end of the table which is a mix of permanent and temporary measures.
79	Pension Costs Adjustment	-0.151	-0.151	0	Completed
80	MTFS 90 (Feb 23) Strategic Leisure Review	+1.250	+1.250	0	Completed - Growth item budget adjustment only - replacing 2023/24 £1.3m savings target.
81	MTFS 91 (Feb 23) – Green Spaces Maintenance Review	-0.200	-0.200	0	Green - Year 2 saving - Policy now implemented and full saving secured from ANSA contract.
82	MTFS 92 (Feb 23) - Review Waste Collection Service - Green Waste	-3.150	-3.150	0	Green - Subscription levels in line with original business model.

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83	Review MTFS 92 (Feb 23) Garden waste subscription financial model in line with latest subscription levels and with actual observed position on any waste migration	-0.429	-0.429	0	Green – 24-25 outturn fully achieved the MTFS target, there will need to be continued monitoring of subscription levels and any adverse impacts is already in place in 25-26.
84	MTFS 93 (Feb 23) Libraries - Service Review	-0.200	-0.200	0	Amber - Year 2 of Service Review - reduction in staffing levels have been implemented and now include vacancy management in year to ensure achievement of saving. Currently covered temporarily by vacancy savings
85	Explore a Trust delivery model for Libraries and other services	+0.150	+0.003	-0.147	Green - Growth item to cover one off costs relating to implementation of alternative delivery model(s) for libraries service. Aligned to development of Libraries Strategy.
86	CCTV – Service Efficiencies	-0.030	-0.030	0	Green – Ongoing actions to increase customer base for existing services, identification of new chargeable services/customers and service efficiency savings as well as increased fees and charges to meet the target.
87	Congleton Town Council Collaboration Agreement – Grounds Maintenance	-0.062	-0.062	0	Completed - Congleton Town Council Collaboration Agreement on Grounds Maintenance Cheshire East Contribution reduced in line with reductions in Cheshire East Maintained green space.
88	Closed Cemeteries	+0.005	+0.005	0	Completed - Inflationary adjustment to previous budget allocation only.
89	Environmental Hub maintenance	+0.023	+0.023	0	Completed - Inflationary adjustment to previous budget allocation only.
90	Review Closed Landfill Sites	+0.300*	+0.300*	0	Completed - The Council has responsibility for a number of closed landfill sites across the borough for which it holds a provision.
91	Land Charge Income Adjustment	+0.050	+0.067	+0.017	Amber - Uncertainty around implementation timescales of HMLR changes to centralise some aspects of land charges functions hence understanding of actual impact, to be regularly monitored.
92	Building Control Income Alignment	+0.203	+0.286	+0.083	Amber - Due to current national trend of downturn in planning and related building control income. To be monitored through more regular financial forecasting in service. Reforms to national planning policy recently consulted upon may have a positive impact on this position moving forward due to uplift in both volume and pace of developments coming forward. To be

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					considered in due course following Govt announcement.
93	Local Plan Review	+0.255	0	-0.255	Amber - Reprofiled budget adjustment to provide additional funding towards development of new Local Plan
94	Planning income	+0.400	+0.522	+0.122	Amber – Forecast reduced income in year due to current national trend of downturn in planning applications and hence income. Proactively monitored through regular financial forecasting in service. Partially mitigated by continued high level of vacancies and the item at the end of the table. Recent national planning policy forms announced by Govt which were recently subject to a consultation process may help to alleviate the income position, but will require vacancies to be filled to cater for the likely increase in applications. To be considered as and when further announcement made.
95	Planning Service Restructure	-	-	-	Green - No action for 2024/25. Growth for 2025/26 to be kept under review.
96	Review of Household Waste Recycling Centres	+0.100	+0.100	0	Green – completed on time following decision at Environment and Communities Committee on 26 September 2024 to proceed with preferred option and finalisation of new operating contract procurement process.
In year	Environment & Neighbourhood Services mitigations 2024/25 to balance back to outturn position	0	-2.796	-2.796	

* Item represented a one-off saving in 2023/24. As it is not a permanent part of the budget, the value of the proposal is reversed in 2024/25.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Highways and Transport Committee	+4.869	+3.084	-1.785	
97	Highway maintenance savings	-0.750	-0.750	0	Green - Savings are being achieved through: - reducing the number of cuts on grass verges from 10 to 8; - directly employing staff to carry out surveys, rather than sub-contracting; - reductions in staffing and vacancy management; and - reliance on the Council's adverse weather reserve for snow clearance. Service budgets have been reduced to reflect the savings being made.
98	Introduce annual increases to car parking charges	-0.150	-0.150	0	Green - Annual inflation adjustment to existing P&D tariffs can be implemented by 1st July 2024, in advance of bringing charges into effect in the "free towns". This is 3 months earlier than planned.
99	Pension Costs Adjustment	-0.052	-0.052	0	Completed
100	Highways	-0.031	-0.031	0	Completed - This saving was delivered by changes to response times to defects in 2023/24.
101	Safe Haven outside schools (Parking)	-0.023	0	0.023	Red - Introduction of CCTV camera enforcement of waiting/loading restrictions at school gates on a trial basis using bespoke equipment that is type approved and proven for these purposes in order to improve road safety and increase enforcement capacity at these high risk locations.
102	Transport and Infrastructure Strategy Team - Restructure	+0.120	0	-0.120	Amber - Vacancies in existing structure provide some flexibilities of resourcing. Business case for a recruitment plan has been developed setting out the opportunity to reduce costs of outsourcing / agency staffing. This will be taken forward in 2025/26.
103	Pay Inflation	+0.339	+0.351	+0.012	Red - NJC Pay Claim now approved - over spend against budget as a result of £1,290/2.5% increase. Increase compared to flat percentage budget increase of 3% within original MTFS. This item is being mitigated by the item at the end of the table which is a mix of permanent and temporary measures.
104	Parking - PDA / Back Office System contract	+0.100	+0.048	-0.052	Green - Market testing completed - exploring a direct award opportunity with implementation testing and data migration. System to be implemented in 2025-26
105	Flood and Water Management Act 2010	+0.100	+0.100	0	Green - The requirement is to be ready to implement changes when regulations are implemented nationally.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	SuDS & SABs Schedule 3 Implementation				A training plan for existing staff has been identified. Recruitment is to be progressed.
106	Energy saving measures from streetlights	+0.242	+0.242	0	Completed - This entry was in the MTFS to cancel an unachievable saving from 2022/23. There is no further action.
107	Parking	+0.245	+0.820	+0.575	Amber - Following decisions in January 2024, tariffs were uplifted on 1 July 2024 and extend pay and display to car parks in "free towns" from the start of December. Statutory consultations on Sunday and Evening charges have been completed to inform implementation in 2025-26. A trial of demand-responsive tariffs began with the opening of the new multistorey car park in Crewe.
108	Highways Revenue Services	+2.479	+2.479	0	Completed - This is a growth item. The growth has been factored into 2024/25 service levels and business plans. No further action.
109	Local Bus	+2.250	+1.459	-0.791	Green – network of new contracts was successfully tendered and began operating on 30 March 2025.
110	FlexiLink Service Improvement Plan	-	-	-	Green - A bus service review is underway, including proposals relating to flexible transport. Committee received a report updating on the outcomes of the consultation and the approach to procurement on 19 September 2024. The review of flexible transport will consider its role in filling gaps in local bus service provision, especially in rural areas, as well as options to extend hours of operation, open up the service to more users and introduce fares to make a contribution to operating costs.
111	Highways Depot Improvements	-	-	-	Red - This later year saving is subject to the approval of the business case for capital investment in depots. This will be reviewed during 2024/25.
112	Bus Stop Advertising Revenue Generation	-	-	-	Amber - Opportunity to shadow CWAC council's extension of the existing contract in the interim period. Intention to link this to wider on street advertising project in the transformation project.
In year	Highways & Infrastructure 2024/25 mitigations to balance to outturn position	0	-1.432	-1.432	

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Central Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Finance Sub-Committee	-19.667	-12.277	+7.390	
113	Capital Financing Budget	+9.508	+10.517	+1.009	Amber – assumes use of available capital financing reserve of £2.135m compared to budget.
114	Central Bad Debt Provision adjustment	+0.600	+0.600	0	Completed - budget adjustment.
115	Use of Earmarked Reserves – MTFS Reserve	+0.255	+0.255	0	Completed - budget adjustment / planned use of reserve.
115	MTFS Reserve – reversal of 2023/24 use	+1.536	+1.536	0	Completed - budget adjustment / planned use of reserve.
116	Collection Fund Reserve - Use of Earmarked Reserves	-0.834	-0.834	0	Completed - budget adjustment / planned use of reserve.
116	Collection Fund Reserve – reversal of 2023/24 use of reserves	+2.234	+2.234	0	Completed - budget adjustment / planned use of reserve.
117	Brighter Futures Transformation – reversal of 2023/24 use of reserves	+1.271	+1.271	0	Completed - budget adjustment / planned use of reserve.
118	Use of General Reserves – Fund in-year budget shortfall [NEW]	-11.654	-11.654	0	Completed - Drawn down in line with the MTFS forecast.
Amber 119	Council Tax - % increase	-13.527	-13.527	0	Green - Council tax and business rates income collection managed through the Collection Fund therefore no impact on current year funding target.
120	Council Tax – Base increase	-2.461	-2.461	0	Green - Council tax and business rates income collection managed through the Collection Fund therefore no impact on current year funding target.
121	Business Rates Retention Scheme – use of S31 compensation grants	-1.350	-1.350	0	Green - Grants received in line with final settlement from MHCLG.
122	Unring-fenced Grants + Revenue Support Grant	-5.245	-5.245	0	Green - Grants received in line with final settlement from MHCLG.
123	Council Tax and Business Rates Collection [NEW]	TBC	-	-	Initial case was to implement a working group to review council tax collection. No savings value was assigned to the case. The intention now is to bring forward via an informal briefing to include options around the council tax support scheme review (FS2428)

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Central Budgets	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Final Outturn £m	2024/25 Outturn Variance £m	Final Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)
124	Council Tax Support [NEW]	TBC	-	-	No change to Council Tax support scheme for 2024/25 or 2025/26. To be reviewed for 2026/27.
In year	Bad Debt Provision reduction (one off)	-	-1.081	-1.081	New bad debt policy has been adopted by Adults Social Care.
In year	S106 Review (one off)	-	-0.574	-0.574	S106 Review identifying a one off contribution in year where work has been completed in prior years but has not been reflected in transferring money from S106 into the general fund
In year	Increased use of reserves re Transformation spend included in Service position	-	-3.827	-3.827	Use of reserves to fund essential expenditure to progress the Transformation programme in 2024/25
In year	Creation of new Transformation Reserve as set out in the 2025/26 MTFS	-	3.500	3.500	Creation of a reserve as reflected in the 2025/26 MTFS to fund Transformation delivery in 2025/26.
In year	Creation of new Change and Improvement reserve	-	5.300	5.300	New reserve created to cover one off costs of change and improvement activity in 2025/26 and 2026/27.
In year	Review of MRP accounting policy wef 1.4.2024	-	-3.411	-3.411	New MRP Accounting Policy adopted with effect from 1 April 2024 and as approved in the 2025/26 MTFS (Feb25)
In year	Creation of new earmarked service reserves	-	2.525	2.525	Additional reserves to fund one off expenditure in 2025/26 which is not included in service base budgets.
In year	Transfer to General Fund Reserve	-	2.473	2.473	Additional transfer to reserves to increase the Council financial sustainability in future years.
In year	Financing and Investment Interest	-	1.100	1.100	Pressure reflecting increased cost of interest payments on borrowing offset by interest receipts from investments
In year	Other in year variances to budget	-	0.376	0.376	

Section 3: Revenue Grants for approval and year end Register

- 3.1. Cheshire East Council receives two main types of Government grants; specific purpose grants and general use grants. Specific purpose grants are held within the relevant service with a corresponding expenditure budget. Whereas general use grants are held in central budgets with a corresponding expenditure budget within the allocated service area.
- 3.2. Spending in relation to specific purpose grants must be in line with the purpose for which it is provided.
- 3.3. **Table 1** shows additional specific purpose grant allocations that have been received over £1m that **Council** will be asked to approve.
- 3.4. **Table 2** shows additional specific purpose grant allocations that have been received which are over £500,000 and up to £1m and are for **Committee** approval.

Table 1 – Council Decision

3.5. Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding (Specific Purpose) over £1,000,000

Committee	Type of Grant	£000	Details
Children & Families: Schools	Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG)	2,502	This grant is from the Education and Skills Funding Agency and is to support schools with their overall costs in the 2024 to 2025 financial year, in particular following confirmation of the 2024 teacher pay award.
Corporate Policy	Housing Benefit Subsidy	2,231	This grant is from the Department for Work and Pensions. Payment of claims administration within Housing Benefits.

Table 2 – Committee Decision

3.6. Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding (Specific Purpose) over £500,000 up to £1,000,000

Committee	Type of Grant	£000	Details
Adults & Health	Homes for Ukraine Scheme	755	This grant is from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to provide support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities.
Children and Families	Staying Close (Specific Purpose 2025/26)	602	This grant is to support the Staying Close programme, to improve outcomes for young people leaving care who do not have that continued support as they transition into independence.

3.7. **Annex 2** contains the full Grants Register for 2024/25 comparing the MTFs budgeted levels to the final outturn for every grant received.

Section 4: Capital

Table 1: Financial Parameters for 2024/25 to 2027/28

Parameter	Value (£m)			
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Repayment of Borrowing				
Minimum Revenue Provision*	15.3	18.5	22.7	24.8
External Loan Interest	19.4	17.9	18.9	20.9
Investment Income	(4.3)	(4.1)	(2.7)	(2.7)
Contributions from Services Revenue Budgets	(0.9)	(1.3)	(2.3)	(2.5)
Total Capital Financing Costs	29.4	30.5	36.1	39.8
Actual CFB in MTFS	28.5	35.0	38.8	41.9
Budget underspend /(overspend)	(0.9)	4.5	2.7	2.1
Capital Receipts targets*	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Flexible use of Capital Receipts	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

*Anticipated MRP based on achieving capital receipts targets

- 4.1. The revised programme is funded from both direct income (grants, external contributions) and the Council's own resources (prudential borrowing, revenue contributions, capital reserve). A funding summary is shown in **Table 2**. For detailed tables by Committee please see **Annex 3**.
- 4.2. **Table 3** lists details of Delegated decisions up to £500,000 for noting.
- 4.3. Table 4 lists Capital Supplementary Estimates over £500,000 and up to £1,000,000 for committee approval and Capital Virements over £500,000 and up to and including £5,000,000 that require Relevant Member(s) of CLT and Chief Finance Officer in consultation with Chair of the relevant Committee and the Chair of Finance Sub-Committee to approve.
- 4.4. **Table 5** lists details of Capital Supplementary Estimates over £1,000,000 that requires Committee to make a recommendation to Council to approve.
- 4.5. **Table 6** lists details of reductions in Approved Budgets where schemes are completed and surpluses can now be removed. These are for noting purposes only.

Table 2: Capital Programme Update

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL CAPITAL PROGRAMME SUMMARY					
CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28					
	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast 2025/26 £000	Forecast 2026/27 £000	Forecast 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast 2024-28 £000
Committed Schemes - In Progress					
Adults and Health	280	468	0	0	748
Children and Families	9,513	46,283	16,356	17,749	89,901
Highways & Transport	40,647	44,009	27,653	119,831	232,140
Economy & Growth	23,110	51,882	29,539	78,575	183,106
Environment & Communities	4,262	13,929	1,034	15,301	34,526
Corporate Policy	5,465	10,125	1,173	0	16,763
Total Committed Schemes - In Progress	83,277	166,696	75,755	231,456	557,184
CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28					
	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast 2025/26 £000	Forecast 2026/27 £000	Forecast 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast 2024-28 £000
New Schemes in 2024-25					
Children and Families	209	9,848	5,248	3,000	18,305
Highways & Transport	570	22,617	15,051	15,051	53,289
Economy & Growth	2,613	4,652	3,366	3,187	13,818
Environment & Communities	1,653	4,677	1,150	0	7,480
Total New Schemes	5,045	41,794	24,815	21,238	92,892
Total	88,322	208,490	100,570	252,694	650,076
Funding Requirement					
Indicative Funding Analysis:					
Government Grants	49,791	129,470	75,248	119,235	373,745
External Contributions	4,002	19,742	13,121	68,619	105,483
Revenue Contributions	901	1,290	0	0	2,191
Capital Receipts	0	1,210	1,324	33,381	35,915
Prudential Borrowing (See note 1)	33,629	56,776	10,876	31,460	132,742
Total	88,322	208,490	100,570	252,694	650,076

Note 1:

Appropriate charges to the revenue budget will only commence in the year following the completion of the associated capital asset. This allows the Council to constantly review the most cost effective way of funding capital expenditure.

Table 3: Delegated Decisions – lists details of Delegated decisions up to £500,000 for noting

Committee / Capital Scheme	Amount Requested £	Reason and Funding Source
Supplementary Capital Estimates that have been made up to £500,000		
Children and Families		
Family Hubs Transformation	115,115	Transfer of Family Hubs Revenue grant to capital project.
Economy & Growth		
Housing Strategy		
Disabled Facilities Grant	342,795	To uplift to match the budget allocation to the grant received.
Home Repairs Vulnerable People	231,842	To include income received from external parties
Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2	17,131	To include income received from external parties
Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2	6,361	To include income received from external parties
Culture & Tourism		
Cattle Handling Facility - Oakwood Farm	37,694	To increase the budget to cover additional expenditure, funded by Revenue Contribution
Wilmslow Dobbin Brook Informal Footpath s106	89,000	Supplementary Capital Estimates approved in quarter
Alsager Footpath No.10 s106	23,140	
Infrastructure		
Spath Lane, Handforth	14,364	To increase the budget to cover additional expenditure, funded by S106 Contribution
Marsh Lane, Holmes Chap Bus St	38	
Coppenhall East, Remer Street, Crewe (11/1643N).	102,351	Supplementary Capital Estimates approved in quarter
Linley Lane/B5077 Junction & Footway improvements	150,000	
Wheelock St, Middlewich S106 ref 686A	11,282	
Holmes Chapel Road, Middlewich S106 Ref 448	20,859	
London Road. Nantwich S106 457D	117,617	
Old Newcastle Rd, - s106 ref 369B	20,099	
Bank Corner Junction, Alsager	76,715	
Main Road, Weston	281,663	Supplementary Capital Estimates approved in quarter
Davenport Arms	21,551	
Highways & Transport		
Jack Mills Way Part 1 Claims	6,763	To align the budget with expected contributions from Network Rail
Active Travel Fund - Tranche 5	239,282	Additional Active Travel funding from Department for Transport
BSIP Phase 3 funding	250,000	Additional Bus Service Improvement Plan funding from Department for Transport
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates Requested		1,686,379
£		
Capital Budget Virements that have been made up to £500,000		
Children & Families		
Early Years sufficiency capital fund	155	Virement to Family Hubs Transformation
Education and 14-19 Skills		
Macclesfield Planning Area secondary	5,560	Transfer of remaining budget to Tyherington High school project
Brine Leas High School	8,271	
Shavington Planning Area - Secondary	15,776	Virements from Basic need on project closure
Congleton Planning Area	1,993	
Holmes Chapel Secondary School	5,191	Virements to Basic Need on project closure
Sandbach Boys School	1,979	
School Condition Grant	107,350	Virements to School Condition Allocation from remaining budgets on various closed school managed schemes
SCG - Condition Assessments 2021-22	14,269	Virements to individual schemes from School Condition Allocation on closure
Edleston Primary School - Condition Project	390	
Styal Primary School - Condition Project	223	
High Needs	32,396	Virement to High Needs from budget remaining on various closed schemes
Leighton SEND Reception Adaptations	25,629	Virements to schemes from High Needs
Provision of SEN Unit - Wistaston Primary School	17,347	

Economy & Growth		
Future High Street Funding - CEC Innovation Centre	278,000	Future High Street grant funding realigned from Sustainable Energy Network to cover TADIC's energy improvement measures.
Macclesfield Indoor Market Refurbishment (MIMR)	98,285	Virement from Facilities Management Premises Capital Programme to contribute to the full cost of the project.
Macclesfield Indoor Market Toilet Refurbishment	5	
Strategic Housing		
Home Repairs Vulnerable People	458,000	At Economy & Growth Committee on 12/11/24 a virement for £458,000 was approved from the Green Homes Grant to Home Repairs for Vulnerable People in the capital programme.
Infrastructure		
Future High Street Funding - Southern Gateway	76,934	To vire Future High Street Fund from Flag Lane Link To utilise Future High Street Funding originally allocated to Delamere Street and Chester Street (Housing projects) which did not progress and were abandoned.
	8,331	
Crewe Green Link Road Ph2	6,097	Payment of residual invoices relating to Crewe Green Link Road funded by S106 which was originally earmarked for David Whitby Way.
Environment & Communities		
Environment Services		
Green Investment schemes (Solar Farm)	200,000	Transfer of funds from Carbon Nuetral 2030 Investments (Previousl Solar Energy)
Highways & Transport		
A532 Safer Road Fund Scheme	243,000	Prudential Borrowing funding element vired from A537 to cover revised forecast expenditure.
Sustainable Travel (Active Travel) - Boulderstone Bridge	7,633	There has been a fine adjustment to the agreed contribution to Network Rail, which now stands at £379,190.35. Transfer from Client Contract and asset Management
Hollinswood Rd/Redhouse Ln	42,603	Department for Transport grant reallocated from the Client Contract and asset Management project to cover expenditure in 2024-25
Traffic Signs and Bollards - LED Replacement	8592.37	
Footpath Maintenance - Slurry Sealing & Reconstruction Works	3676.85	
Hurdsfield Road/Black Lane junction, Macclesfield Cycleway (S Bollin Valley / Greater Bollin Trail	13,833	
	70,252	Reallocated funding within the STEPS Programme to cover 2024-25 expenditure
	13,833	
Manchester Road, Wilmslow – Northern	100,000	£325,000 virement from STEPS - Active Travel to provide additional budget.
Southern Gateway	100,000	
Ayrshire Way/Park Lane, Congleton	125,000	
Facilities Management		
PSDS - 3C	223,000	Virement from Premises Capital, match funding for grant
Total Capital Budget Virements Approved	2,299,773	
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates and Virements	3,986,153	

Table 4: Requests for Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCEs)

Committee / Capital Scheme	Amount Requested £	Reason and Funding Source
Service Committee are asked to approve the Supplementary Capital Estimates above £500,000 up to and including £1,000,000		
Education and 14-19 Skills		
School Condition Allocation	552,916	A provisional amount of £2,000,000 was included within the MTFS for 2025-26. The allocation has now been confirmed as £2,552,916
Highways & Transport		
Mill Street Corridor - Station Link Project	(687,364)	
Park Lane – Ayreshire Way, Congleton Walking and Cycling	107,410	
Growth and Enterprise		
Visitor Economy - Rural Shared Prosperity Fund	49,980	Additional grant funding of £493,800 has been added to the Capital Programme alongside reallocations on various schemes to reflect in year spend. This grant was required to be spent by 31st March 2025.
UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Core	354,077	
Mill Street Corridor	450,000	
Macc on Foot (MOF)	65,975	
Macclesfield Indoor Market Refurbishment (MIMR)	85,500	
Royal Arcade Ph2 Meanwhile Uses	40,280	
Environment and Communities		
Crewe Towns Fund - Cumberland Arena	80,000	
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates Requested	1,098,773	
Total Capital Virements requested	-	
Total SCEs and Virements	1,098,773	

Table 5: Requests for Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCEs) For Finance Sub Committee Recommendation or Approval

Committee	Amount Requested £	Reason and Funding Source
Finance Sub Committee are asked to recommend to Council the approval of the Supplementary Capital SCEs over £1,000,000		
Education and 14-19 Skills		
High Needs Capital Grant	3,955,823	A provisional amount of £2,000,000 was included within the MTFS for High Needs Capital Grant. The 2025-26 allocation has now been
Highways & Transport		
Local Transport Grant	7,754,000	Additional Department for Transport Grant allocated for 2025-26
Housing Strategy		
Warm Homes Local Grant (DESNZ)	7,792,725	Department of Energy Security and Net Zero grant funding, supplementary estimates approved by urgent decision.
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates Requested	19,502,548	
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates and Virements	19,502,548	

Table 6: For information – Budget Reductions

Committee / Capital Scheme	Approved Budget £	Revised Approval £	Reduction £	Reason and Funding Source
Finance Sub Committee are asked to note the reductions in Approved Budgets				
Adults				
Community - Rural Shared Prosperity Fund	412,627	360,570	(52,057)	Reduction in budget at closing 2024-25.
Education and 14-19 Skills				
Devolved Formula Capital	330,000	317,884	(12,116)	Reduction in 2025-26 budget upon confirmation of allocation due to academy conversions
Environment & Communities				
Wilmslow Town Villas	80,964	47,452	(33,512)	Reduction in budget as external funding of £33,512 paid directly to ANSA for work done rather than via CEC
Economy & Growth				
Housing Strategy				
Local Authority Housing Fund	742,380	731,580	(10,800)	To mirror the amount of grant to be received.
Highways & Transport				
Alderley Edge Bypass Scheme Implementation	60,611,100	60,411,100	(200,000)	To align budget to revised forecasting.
Infrastructure				
Flowerpot Phs 1 & Pinchpoint	10,037,232	4,245,620	(5,791,612)	To align the available budget with external funding available, Grant and S106 Developer Contributions
A500 Corridor OBC Update	2,435,000	1,704,550	(730,450)	To reduce budget to match grant received from Department for Transport to fund the scheme.
	81,483,583	67,818,756	(13,664,827)	

Prudential Indicators revisions to: 2024/25 and 2024/26 – 2026/27 and future years

Background

- 4.6. There is a requirement under the Local Government Act 2003 for local authorities to have regard to CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the "CIPFA Prudential Code") when setting and reviewing their Prudential Indicators.

Estimates of Capital Expenditure

- 4.7. In 2024/25, the Council spent £88.3m on capital expenditure as summarised below.

Capital Expenditure	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	Future years £m
Total	88.3	208.5	100.6	252.7

Capital Financing

- 4.8. All capital expenditure must be financed either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing and Private Finance Initiative). The planned financing of capital expenditure is as follows.

Capital Financing	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	Future years £m
Capital receipts	0.0	1.2	1.3	33.4
Government Grants	49.8	129.5	75.2	119.3
External Contributions	4.0	19.7	13.1	68.6
Revenue Contributions	1.0	1.3	0.0	0.0
Total Financing	54.8	151.7	89.6	221.3
Prudential Borrowing	33.5	56.8	10.9	31.4
Total Funding	33.5	56.8	10.9	31.4
Total Financing and Funding	88.3	208.5	100.5	252.7

Source: Cheshire East Finance

Replacement of debt finance

- 4.9. Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP). Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets may be used to replace debt finance. Planned MRP repayments are as follows:

Replacement of debt finance	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	2027/28 Estimate £m
Total	15.3	18.5	22.7	24.8

Source: Cheshire East Finance

Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement

- 4.10. The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP repayments and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR will decrease by £2m during 2024/25. This assumes that were there has been significant forward funding of certain schemes that grants and other contributions are received in year to repay that forward funding. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Council's estimated CFR is as follows.

Capital Financing Requirement	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	2027/28 Estimate £m
Total	521	560	582	595

Source: Cheshire East Finance

Asset disposals

- 4.11. When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts. The Council received £2.2m of capital receipts from asset sales in 2024/25 and has built into the MTFS planned receipts of £3.6m in future years.

Capital Receipts	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	2027/28 Estimate £m
Asset Sales	2.1	1.0	1.0	1.0
Loans Repaid	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2
Total	2.2	1.2	1.2	1.2

Source: Cheshire East Finance

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

- 4.12. The Council's main objectives when borrowing are to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in the future. These objectives are often conflicting and the Council therefore seeks to strike a balance between cheap short term loans and long term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but fixed over a period when rates are expected to fall.
- 4.13. Projected levels of the Council's total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, PFI liabilities, leases) are shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement.

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	2027/28 Estimate £m
Borrowing	396	423	476	512
PFI Liabilities	17	17	15	14
Total Debt	413	440	491	526
Capital Financing Req.	521	560	582	595

Source: Cheshire East Finance

- 4.14. Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short term. As can be seen from the above table, the Council expects to comply with this in the medium term.

Liability Benchmark

- 4.15. To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing (see para 6.18 of the Treasury Management Strategy update). This assumes that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £20m at each year end. This benchmark is currently £372m and is forecast to rise to £447m over the next four years.

Borrowing and the Liability Benchmark	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	2027/28 Estimate £m
Outstanding Debt	396	423	476	512
Liability Benchmark	372	420	445	447

Source: Cheshire East Finance

- 4.16. The table shows that the Council expects to borrow above its liability benchmark.

Affordable borrowing limit

- 4.17. The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

	2024/25 limit £m	2025/26 limit £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	2027/28 Estimate £m
Authorised Limit for Borrowing	570	590	590	590
Authorised Limit for Other Long-Term Liabilities	17	17	15	14
Authorised Limit for External Debt	587	607	605	604
Operational Boundary for Borrowing	560	580	580	580
Operational Boundary for Other Long-Term Liabilities	17	17	15	14
Operational Boundary for External Debt	577	597	595	594

Source: Cheshire East Finance

Investment Strategy

- 4.18. Treasury investments arise from receiving cash before it is paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.
- 4.19. The Council’s policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield, that is to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with money market funds, other local authorities or selected high quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in shares and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of returns below inflation.

Treasury Management Investments	31/03/25 Actual £m	31/03/26 Estimate £m	31/03/27 Estimate £m	31/03/28 Estimate £m
Short term	20	20	20	20
Long term	20	20	20	20
Total Investments	40	40	40	40

Source: Cheshire East Finance

- 4.20. Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue, offset by an investment income receivable. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e., the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants.

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	31/03/25 Actual	31/03/26 Estimate	31/03/27 Estimate	31/03/28 Estimate
Financing Costs (£m)	29.0	30.5	36.1	39.8
Proportion of net revenue stream %	7.33	7.58	8.75	9.37

Source: Cheshire East Finance

Section 5: Reserves

Management of Council Reserves

- 5.1. The Council's Reserves Strategy states that the Council will maintain reserves to protect against risk and support investment.
- 5.2. The opening balance at 1 April 2024 in the Council's General Fund Reserves was £5.6m, as published in the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2023/24. At FR3, the closing balance at 31 March 2025 was forecast to be £0.5m.
- 5.3. During 2024/25, transfers from Earmarked Reserves were made of £13.7m to support the revenue budget. A net total of £11.7m has been drawn down to support the in-year deficit position, whilst a further £3.8m has been used to fund the Council Transformation expenditure.
- 5.4. The current balance on reserves is insufficient in order to provide adequate protection against established and newly emerging risks, such as inflation and particularly the DSG deficit, which is £112.1m at year end and has been highlighted in the MTFs as having no alternative funding.
- 5.5. The Council also maintains Earmarked Revenue Reserves for specific purposes. The opening balance at 1 April 2024 was £32.3m, of which £6.5m has been used to fund expenditure specifically provided for by services. These balances fall within the forecasts approved during the MTFs budget setting process. The closing balance at 31 March 2025 for Earmarked Reserves is £23.3m, of which, £3.2m is ring-fenced for specific use.
- 5.6. The closing balance on General Fund Reserves at 31 March 2025, is £6.3m.
- 5.7. Total reserves available for Council use at 31 March 2025 are £29.6m.
- 5.8. Unspent schools' budgets that have been delegated, as laid down in the Schools Standards Framework Act 1998, remain at the disposal of the school and are not available for Council use. These balances are therefore excluded from all reserve forecasts.

Table 1 – Reserves Balances

Adults and Health Committee						
Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024 £000	Drawdowns / Transfers to General Fund £000	In-year Net Movement £000	New Reserve Requests* £000	Closing Balance 31 March 2025 £000	Notes
<u>Adults Social Care Commissioning</u>						
PFI Equalisation - Extra Care Housing	2,857	(2,857)	0	0	0	Asper the MTFS, this reserve will be replenished over the 4 year MTFS period 2024-2028.
<u>Public Health</u>						
Public Health Reserve	2,369	0	0	835	3,204	Ring-fenced underspend to be invested in areas to improve performance against key targets.
ADULTS AND HEALTH RESERVE TOTAL	5,226	(2,857)	0	835	3,204	

* All New Requests are subject to approval.

Children and Families Committee

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024 £000	Drawdowns / Transfers to General Fund £000	In-year Net Movement £000	New Reserve Requests* £000	Closing Balance 31 March 2025 £000	Notes
<u>Childrens Social Care</u>						
Domestic Abuse Partnership	131	0	(131)	0	0	To sustain preventative services to vulnerable people as a result of partnership funding in previous years.
<u>Strong Start, Family Help and Integration</u>						
Troubled Families Initiative	1,593	0	(1,593)	0	0	Crewe Youth Zone and ACT have been assigned funding from shared outcomes of the Supporting Families Programme.
ILAC Spending Plan	0	0	0	456	456	To carry forward funding identified to fund the ILAC improvement plan which spans across two financial years.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES RESERVE TOTAL	1,724	0	(1,724)	456	456
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* All New Requests are subject to approval.

Corporate Policy Committee and Central Reserves

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024	Drawdowns / Transfers to General Fund	In-year Net Movement	New Reserve Requests*	Closing Balance 31 March 2025	Notes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
<u>Corporate Directorate</u>						
Corporate Directorate Reserve	1,164	(1,164)	0	0	0	To support a number of widespread projects within the Corporate Directorate.
<u>Finance and Customer Service</u>						
Collection Fund Management	8,154	(1,235)	(1,799)	0	5,120	To manage cash flow implications as part of the Business Rates Retention Scheme.
Capital Financing Reserve	4,531	0	(2,289)	0	2,242	To provide for financing of capital schemes, other projects and initiatives
MTFS Reserve	2,914	(3,169)	255	0	0	Reserve balance has been released to the general fund to support the in-year deficit pressure
Brighter Futures Transformation Programme	490	(470)	(20)	0	0	To fund the Council's four-year transformation programme and its five outcomes of Culture; Estates and ICT systems; Customer Experience, Commercial Approach and Governance.
2025/26 Transformation 1	0	0	0	3,500	3,500	Additional reserve to support the 2025/26 Transformation Programme.
2025/26 Transformation 2	0	0	0	@Bal5,300	5,300	To cover the costs of the Transformation Programme to help mitigate anticipated one off cost impacts of change.
Section 31 Revenue Grants	14	(14)	0	0	0	Residual unspent revenue grants have been released to the general fund to support the in-year deficit.

Corporate Policy Committee and Central Reserves Continued

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024	Drawdowns / Transfers to General Fund	In-year Net Movement	New Reserve Requests*	Closing Balance 31 March 2025	Notes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
<u>Governance and Compliance</u>						
Insurance Reserve	3,098	(3,098)	0	314	314	To settle insurance claims and manage excess costs.
Elections General	132	0	0	300	432	To provide funds for Election costs every 4 years.
Brexit Funding	13	(13)	0	0	0	Residual reserve balance has been released to the general fund to support the in-year deficit pressure.
<u>Human Resources</u>						
HR (CARE4CE Review, Culture Change, Pay realignment, Learning Mgt System)	59	(59)	0	0	0	Residual reserve balance has been released to the general fund to support the in-year deficit pressure.
Pay Structure (M Grade Review)	54	(54)	0	0	0	Residual reserve balance has been released to the general fund to support the in-year deficit pressure
<u>ICT</u>						
Digital Solutions Architect	150	0	(76)	0	74	To fund a role for the Digital Customer Enablement programme and will be key to realising the cost savings and efficiencies across the Council from the deployment of a number of digital initiatives.
ICT	0	0	0	300	300	To fund costs associated with Gemini / TOM
CORPORATE POLICY AND CENTRAL RESERVE TOTAL	20,773	(9,276)	(3,929)	9,714	17,282	

* All New Requests are subject to approval.

Economy and Growth Committee

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024	Drawdowns / Transfers to General Fund	In-year Net Movement	New Reserve Requests*	Closing Balance 31 March 2025	Notes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
<u>Directorate</u>						
Place Directorate Reserve	1,164	(306)	(510)	70	418	To support a number of widespread projects within the Place Directorate.
Investment (Sustainability)	610	(40)	(21)	0	549	To support investment that can increase longer term financial independence and stability of the Council.
<u>Growth and Enterprise</u>						
Legal Proceedings	212	0	(33)	0	179	To enable legal proceedings on land and property matters.
Investment Portfolio	534	(534)	0	0	0	The full reserve has been released to the general fund to support the in-year deficit pressure.
Homelessness & Housing Options - Revenue Grants	129	0	(129)	0	0	Grant committed for the purchase and refurbishment of properties to be used as temporary accommodation to house vulnerable families.
Tatton Park Trading Reserve	128	(128)	0	250	250	To fund Tatton Park playground through the Transformation Programme, and cover costs for vehicle replacement, maintenance and repair.
ECONOMY AND GROWTH RESERVE TOTAL	2,777	(1,008)	(693)	320	1,396	

* All New requests are subject to approval.

Environment and Communities Committee

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024	Drawdowns / Transfers to General Fund	In-year Net Movement	New Reserve Requests*	Closing Balance 31 March 2025	Notes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
<u>Environment and Neighbourhood Services</u>						
Strategic Planning	568	(281)	0	0	287	To meet costs associated with the Local Plan - site allocations, minerals and waste DPD.
Trees / Structures Risk Management	139	(55)	0	0	84	To help respond to increases in risks relating to the environment, in particular the management of trees, structures and dealing with adverse weather events.
Air Quality	36	0	0	0	36	Air Quality Management - DEFRA Action Plan. Relocating electric vehicle charge point in Congleton.
Licensing Enforcement	8	0	2	0	10	Three year reserve to fund a third party review and update of the Cheshire East Council Taxi Licensing Enforcement Policies.
Flood Water Management (Emergency Planning)	2	0	0	0	2	Relating to Public Information Works.
Neighbourhood Planning	82	(41)	0	0	41	To match income and expenditure.
Spatial Planning - revenue grant	13	(13)	0	0	0	Residual reserve balance has been released to the general fund to support the in-year deficit pressure.
Street Cleansing	22	0	0	0	22	Committed expenditure on voluntary litter picking equipment and electric blowers.
ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD RESERVE TOTAL	870	(390)	2	0	482	

* All New Requests are subject to approval.

Highways and Transport Committee

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024	Drawdowns / Transfers to General Fund	In-year Net Movement	New Reserve Requests*	Closing Balance 31 March 2025	Notes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Highways and Infrastructure						
Rail and Transport Integration	385	(185)	(200)	0	0	To support the Council's committed costs to the rail and transport networks across the borough.
Flood Risk Adverse Weather Events	400	0	0	0	400	To help the service manage risks such as the impact of adverse weather, specifically flooding or extensive periods where winter maintenance is required.
Highways Procurement Project	104	(20)	(1)	0	83	To finance the development of the next Highway Service Contract. Depot mobilisation costs, split over 7 years from start of contract in 2018.
LEP-Local Transport Body	19	0	0	0	19	Contribution to LEP transport studies/consultancy. Ongoing working around Transport Legacy issues.
ECONOMY AND GROWTH RESERVE TOTAL	908	(205)	(201)	0	502	

* All New Requests are subject to approval.

Total Reserves

Reserve Account	Opening Balance 01 April 2024	Drawdowns / Transfers to General Fund	In-year Net Movement	New Reserve Requests*	Closing Balance 31 March 2025	Notes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Total Earmarked Reserves	32,278	(13,736)	(6,545)	11,325	23,322	
General Fund Reserve	5,580	13,736	(15,481)	2,473	6,308	
RESERVE TOTAL	37,858	0	(22,026)	13,798	29,630	

* All New Requests are subject to approval.

Section 6: Treasury Management

Management of Council Reserves

- 6.1 Treasury management is the management of the Authority's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Authority has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Authority's prudent financial management.
- 6.2. Treasury risk management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the *Local Government Act 2003* to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
- 6.3. Investments held for service purposes or for commercial profit are considered in the Investment Report (see **Section 9**).

1. External Context

- 6.4. **Economic background:** Both the UK and US elected new governments during the period, whose policy decisions impacted the economic outlook. The Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered her Spring Statement in March 2025, following her Budget in October 2024. Based on the plans announced, the Office for Budget Responsibility downgraded its predictions for UK growth in 2025 to 1% from 2%. However, it upgraded its predictions for the four subsequent years. Inflation predictions for 2025 were pushed up, to 3.2% from 2.6%, before seen as falling back to target in 2027. The market reaction to the Spring Statement was more muted compared to the Budget, with very recent market turbulence being driven more by US trade policy decisions and President Trump.
- 6.5. UK annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) Inflation continued to stay above the 2% Bank of England (BoE) target in the later part of the period. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported headline consumer prices at 2.8% in February 2025, down from 3% in the previous month and below expectations. Core CPI also remained elevated falling slightly in February to 3.5%, just below expected 3.6% but higher than the last 3 months of 2024.
- 6.6. The UK economy Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 0.1% between October and December 2024, unrevised from the initial estimate. This was an

improvement on the zero growth in the previous quarter, but down from the 0.4% growth between April and June 2024. The economy was estimated to have contracted by 0.1% in January 2025, worse than the expectations for a 1% gain.

- 6.7. The labour market continued to cool, but the ONS data still requires treating with caution. Recent data showed the unemployment rate rose to 4.4% (3mth/year) in the three months to January 2025 while the economic inactivity rate fell again to 21.5%. The ONS reported pay growth over the same three-month period at 5.9% for regular earnings (excluding bonuses) and 5.8% for total earnings.
- 6.8. The BoE's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) held Bank Rate at 4.5% at its March 2025 meeting, having reduced it in February. This follows earlier 0.25% cuts in November and August 2024 from the 5.25% peak. At the March MPC meeting, members voted 8-1 to maintain Bank Rate at 4.5%, with the one dissenter preferring another 25 basis points cut. The meeting minutes implied a slightly more hawkish tilt compared to February when two MPC members wanted a 50bps cut. In the minutes, the Bank also upgraded its Q1 2025 GDP forecast to around 0.25% from the previous estimate of 0.1%
- 6.9. The February Monetary Policy Report (MPR) showed the BoE expected GDP growth in 2025 to be significantly weaker compared to the November MPR. GDP is forecast to rise by 0.1% in Q1 2025, less than the previous estimate of 0.4%. Four-quarter GDP growth is expected to pick up from the middle of 2025, to over 1.5% by the end of the forecast period. The outlook for CPI inflation showed it remaining above the MPC's 2% target throughout 2025. It is expected to hit around 3.5% by June before peaking at 3.7% in Q3 and then easing towards the end of the year, but staying above the 2% target.
- 6.10. Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that Bank Rate would continue to fall throughout 2025. Further to the cut in May to 4.25%, it is anticipated that other cuts will follow in line with MPR months to take Bank rate down to 3.75% by the end of 2025.
- 6.11. **Financial Markets:** Financial market sentiment was reasonably positive over most of the period but economic, financial and geopolitical issues meant the trend of market volatility remained. In the latter part of the period, volatility increased and bond yields started to fall following a January peak, as the economic uncertainty around likely US trade policy impacted financial markets. Yields in the UK and US started to diverge in the last month of the period, with the former rising around concerns over the fiscal implications on the UK government from weaker growth, business sentiment and higher rates, while the latter started falling on potential recession fears due to the unpredictable nature of policy announcements by the US President and their potential impact. Since then, the US announced 'reciprocal tariffs', the immediate aftermath of which saw stock prices and government bond yields falling and introduced further uncertainty over the economic outlook.

- 6.12. **Credit Review:** Due to improving credit conditions our treasury advisors, increased their recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on most banks on its counterparty list to 6 months from the previous limit of 100 days.
- 6.13. Credit default swap prices were generally lower over the period but did start to rise modestly in March but not to any level causing concern. Price volatility over the period was also generally more muted compared to previous periods.
- 6.14. Financial market volatility is expected to remain a feature, at least in the near term and credit default swap levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review

2. Local Context

- 6.15. As at 31 March 2025 the Authority has borrowings of £414m and investments of £39m. Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary and Forecast

	31/03/25 Actual £m	31/03/26 Estimate £m	31/03/27 Estimate £m	31/03/28 Estimate £m	*
General Fund CFR	538	578	597	609	
Less: Other long term liabilities *	(17)	(17)	(15)	(14)	
Loans CFR	521	561	582	595	
Less: External borrowing **	(396)	(163)	(133)	(119)	
Internal (over) borrowing	126	398	448	477	
Less: Usable reserves	(122)	(113)	(108)	(119)	
Less: Working capital	(47)	(50)	(50)	(51)	
(Treasury Investments) or New borrowing	(44)	235	290	307	

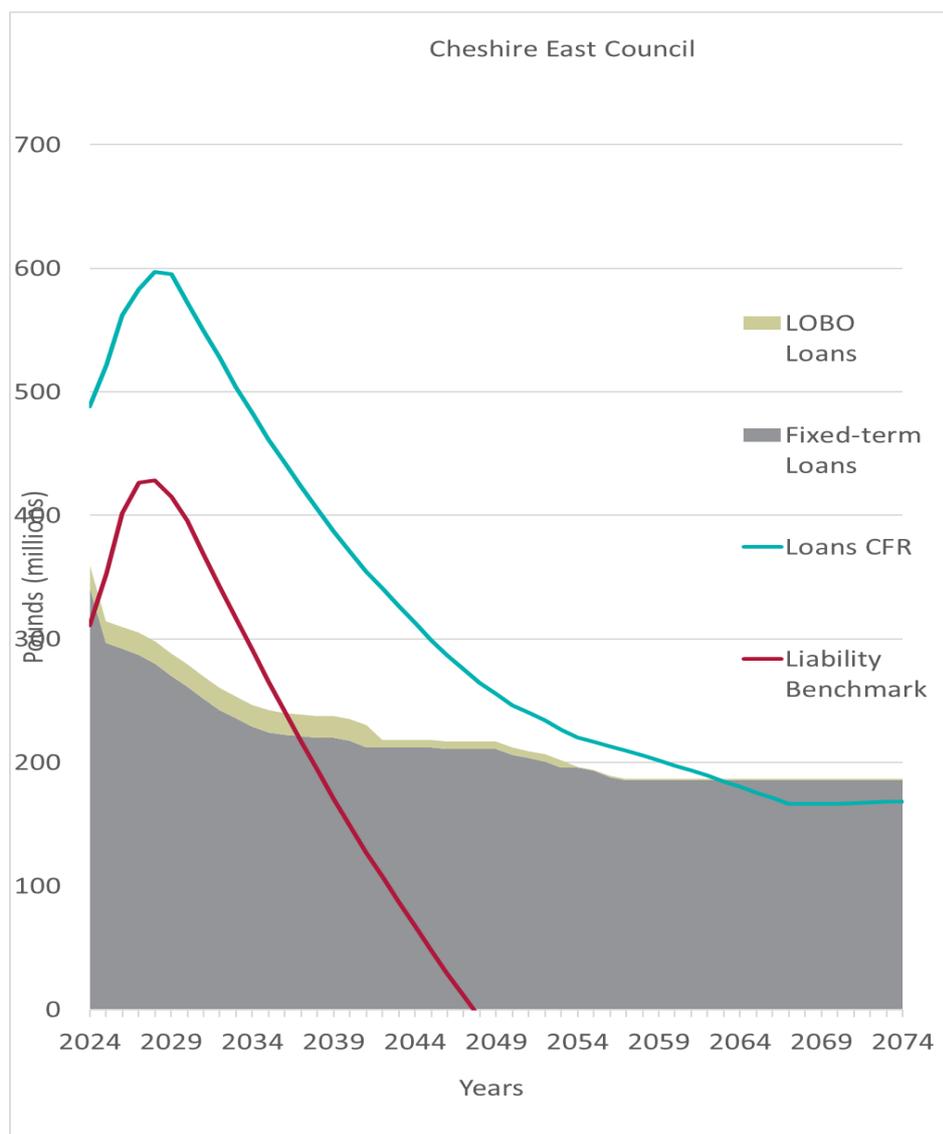
*finance leases and PFI liabilities that form part of the Authority's debt

** shows only loans to which the Authority is committed and excludes optional refinancing

- 6.16. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Authority's current strategy is to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing.
- 6.17. CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance recommends that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. **Table 1** shows that the Authority expects to comply with this recommendation.
- 6.18. **Liability Benchmark:** To compare the Councils actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes the same forecasts as table 1 above, but that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £20m at each year-end to maintain a core strategic investment.

Table 2: Liability Benchmark

	31/03/25 Actual £m	31/03/26 Estimate £m	31/03/27 Estimate £m	31/03/28 Estimate £m
Loans CFR	521	561	582	595
Less: Usable reserves	(122)	(113)	(108)	(103)
Less: Working capital	(47)	(50)	(50)	(51)
Plus: Minimum investments	20	20	20	20
Liability Benchmark	372	418	444	446

Chart 1: Liability benchmark

3. Borrowing Strategy

- 6.19. CIPFA's 2021 Prudential Code is clear that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for local authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement, and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the Authority. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield unless these loans are for refinancing purposes.
- 6.20. The Authority has not, and is not planning to borrow to invest primarily for commercial return and so is unaffected by the changes to the Prudential Code
- 6.21. The Authority currently holds loans of £397m, an increase of £60m since 31 March 2024. This increase is primarily due to continued capital expenditure including use of grants received in advance and increasing Dedicated Schools Grant deficit.

- 6.22. The Authority's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long term plans change being a secondary objective. The Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt.
- 6.23. Interest rates have seen substantial rises over the last 3 years which has significantly increased the cost of borrowing. Borrowing costs have begun to fall and the expectation is that they will continue to fall although market uncertainty may impact on the timing of any reductions.
- 6.24. The cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities has generally followed Base Rate over the year. However, liquidity in the market from October onwards caused rates to increase disproportionately compared to underlying Base Rates. The Council's application for Exceptional Financial Support also reduced the credit quality of the Council to some lenders which exacerbated the shortage of liquidity available. As a result some PWLB borrowing was undertaken with a mix of 1-2 year maturity loans and 2-3 year Equal Instalments of Principal (EIP) repayment loans. The average rate payable on these loans is 4.84%. This provides some surety of cost at lower rates than we could otherwise have achieved at the time and reduces over-reliance on short term borrowing. The relatively short period of these PWLB loans should provide opportunities to refinance at lower cost if rates fall in line with expectations.
- 6.25. The cost of short term borrowing in 2024/25 is 5.29% which is an increase from 4.82% in 2023/24. The average rate paid on all borrowing was 5.03%.
- 6.26. **LOBO's:** The Authority holds £17m of LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Authority has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost. All of these LOBOS had options during 2024/25. Some LOBO providers have exercised their options but this has not been the case with our loans. Discussions with the provider indicates that they are unlikely to change their position.

4. Investment Strategy

- 6.27. The Authority holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. Due to the overriding need for short term borrowing, other than £20m invested strategically in managed funds, the investments are generally short term for liquidity purposes.
- 6.28. The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.
- 6.29. The maximum amount that can be invested with any one organisation is set in the Treasury Management Strategy Report. The maximum amount and duration of investments with any institution depends on the organisations credit rating, the type of investment and for banks and building societies, the security of the investment.

Generally credit rated banks and building societies have been set at a maximum value of £6m for unsecured investments and £12m for secured investments. Any limits also apply to the banking group that each bank belongs to. Limits for each Money Market fund have been set at a maximum value of £12m per fund. All potential counterparties are kept under continual review by our treasury advisors and advisory lower limits than those contained in the strategy are applied.

- 6.30. Treasury Management income for 2024/25 is £3,290,000 which is higher than the budgeted £1,870,000. However, borrowing costs are also higher than budgeted at £18.9m compared to budget of £16.1m.
- The average daily investment balance including managed funds during 2024/25 is £65.0m
 - The average annualized interest rate received on in-house investments during 2024/25 is 4.96%
 - The average annualized interest rate received on the externally managed funds during 2024/25 is 5.43%
- 6.31. The Authority's total average interest rate on all investments in 2024/25 is 5.10%. The return is below our own performance target of 5.45% (average Base Rate + 0.50%) due to the short term nature of most of our investments. However, we do compare favourably to the Sterling Over Night Interest Average (SONIA) rate.

Table 3 – Interest Rate Comparison

Comparator	Average Rate 2024/25
Cheshire East	5.10%
SONIA	4.90%
Base Rate	4.95%
Target Rate	5.45%

- 6.32. As the Authority holds reserves and working capital, £20m of this has been placed in strategic investments in order to benefit from higher income returns whilst spreading risk across different asset classes.
- 6.33. The investments are in five different funds which are all designed to give an annual income return higher than cash investments but which have different underlying levels of volatility. By spreading investments across different types of fund, the intention is to dampen any large fluctuations in the underlying value of the investments.

Table 4 –Strategic Investments

Fund Manager	Asset Class	Invested £m	31/03/25 Value £m
CCLA	Property	7.5	7.4
Aegon	Multi Asset	5.0	4.6

Fund Manager	Asset Class	Invested £m	31/03/25 Value £m
Fidelity	Equity - Global	4.0	4.5
Schroders	Equity - UK	2.5	2.4
M & G	Bonds	1.0	0.8
TOTAL		20.0	19.7

6.34. The value of these investments does vary. Fund values had been affected by high inflation, low levels of GDP and market uncertainty following US announcements on global tariffs. However, the past year has shown a gradual improvement. All funds continue to deliver good levels of income return which, although were not significantly higher than cash investments in 2024/25, are expected to remain at this level as interest rates on cash deposits fall in 2025/26 and beyond.

Chart 2 – Current Investments by Counterparty Type

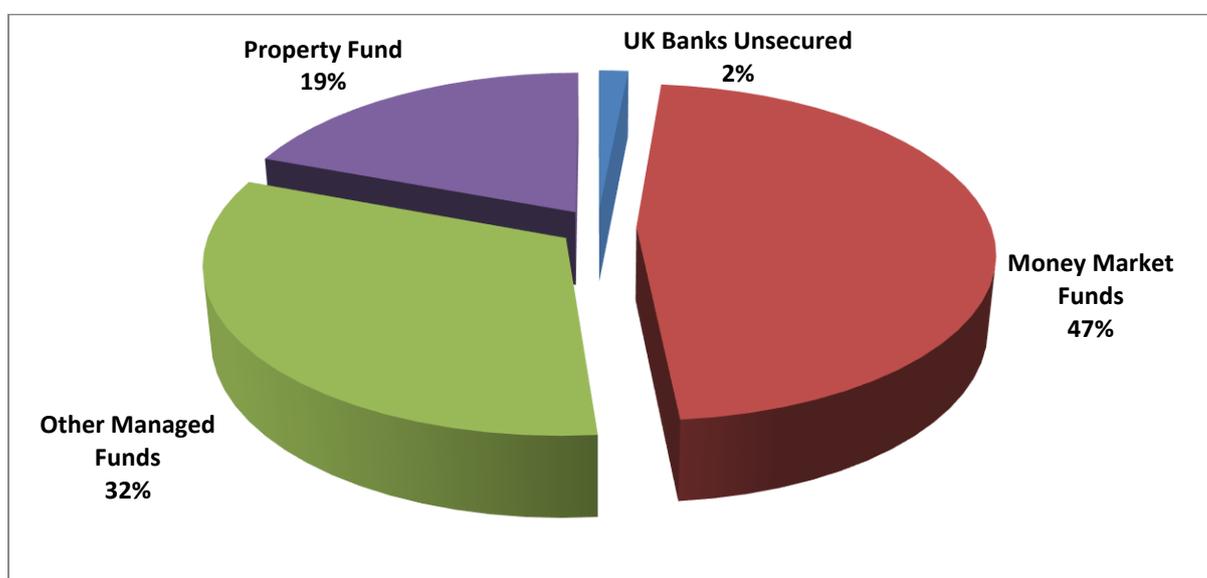
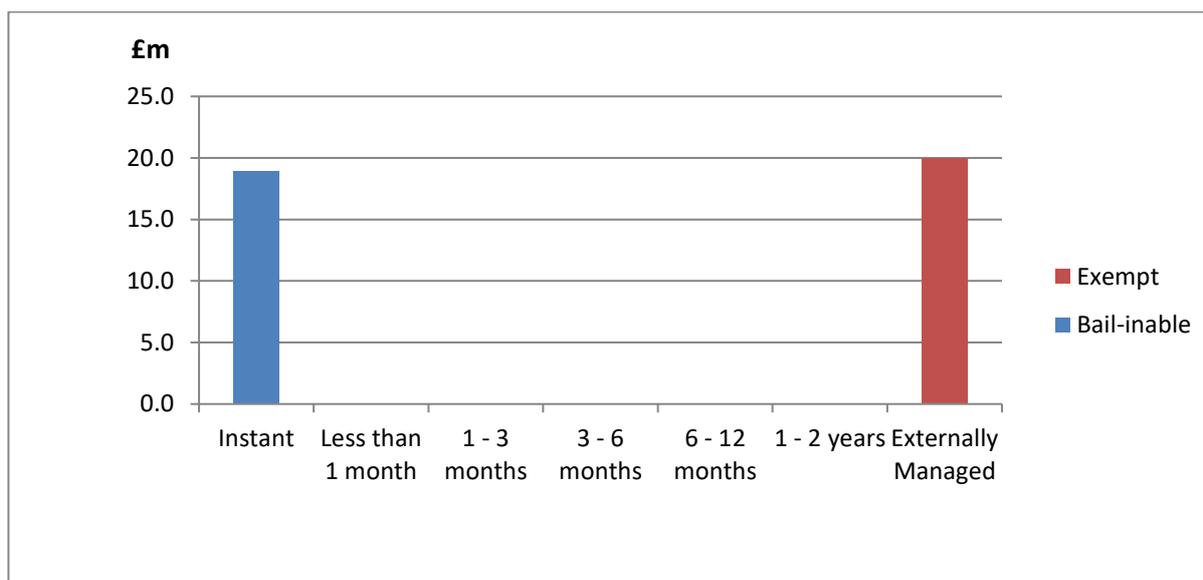


Table 5 – Types of Investments and Current Interest Rates

Instant Access Accounts	Average Rate	£m
Money Market Funds	4.54%	18.3
Banks	4.34%	0.6
Externally Managed Funds		£m
Total – see table 4	5.43%	20.0
Summary of Current Investments		£m
TOTAL	4.93%	38.9

Chart 3 – Maturity Profile of Investments



6.35. Note: Bail-inable means that in the event of default the counterparty may be required to use part of the investments as their own capital in which case the Council would not get back as much as they invested. This would apply with most bank and Building Society investments.

Treasury Management Indicators

6.36. The Authority measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

6.37. **Interest Rate Exposures:** This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limit on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise in interest rates is:

Interest Rate Risk Indicator	Limit
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	£2,270,000
Actual impact in 2024/25 of changes in interest rates compared to budget	£250,000

6.38. The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investments will be replaced at current rates. Borrowing and

investment rates during 2024/25 were broadly in line with the budgeted expectations.

- 6.39. **Maturity Structure of Borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. Lower limits have been set at 0%. The upper limits on the maturity structure of borrowing and the actual maturity profiles as at 31 March 2025 are:

Refinancing rate risk indicator	Upper Limit	Actual
Under 12 months	75%	59%
12 months and within 24 months	75%	8%
24 months and within 5 years	75%	9%
5 years and within 10 years	75%	12%
10 years and within 20 years	100%	5%
20 years and above	100%	7%

- 6.40. Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

- 6.41. **Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than 364 days:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the total principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period are:

Price Risk Indicator	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£25m	£15m	£10m
Actual amounts committed beyond year end	£0m	£0m	£0m

Annex A: Existing Investment & Debt Portfolio Position

	31/03/25 Actual Portfolio £m	31/03/25 Average Rate for the year %
External Borrowing:		
PWLB – Fixed Rate	201	4.79%
Local Authorities	170	5.30%
LOBO Loans	17	4.63%
Other	9	4.91%
Total External Borrowing	397	5.03%
Other Long Term Liabilities:		
PFI	17	-
Total Gross External Debt	414	-
Investments:		
<i>Managed in-house</i>		
Short-term investments:		
Instant Access	19	4.96%
<i>Managed externally</i>		
Property Fund	7.5	4.91%
Multi Asset Fund	5	5.53%
Equity - Global	4	5.95%
Equity - UK	2.5	6.47%
Bonds	1	4.13%

Total Investments	39	5.10%
Net Debt	375	-

Section 7: Investment Strategy

Purpose

- 7.1 The Authority is required to present an Investment Strategy to Council on an annual basis. It does this via the MTFS approval process. This short summary updates the tables included in the main Investment Strategy. For a more detailed commentary please see the main Strategy within the published MTFS document.
- The purpose of the Investment Strategy is to:
 - set out the Council's approach to managing investments,
 - establish financial limits for various classifications of investment,
 - recognise the role and responsibilities of the Finance Sub-Committee and its position as the main conduit through which investment opportunities should be considered.
- 7.2 The definition of an investment covers all the financial assets of a local authority as well as other non-financial assets that the organisation holds primarily or partially to generate a profit; for example, investment property portfolios. This may therefore include investments that are not managed as part of normal treasury management processes or under treasury management delegations.
- 7.3 The Council has a Capital Strategy (prepared in line with the requirements of the Prudential Code); and a Treasury Management Strategy (prepared in line with the requirements of the Treasury Management Code) – relevant disclosures are made within each document.
- 7.4 Consequently, this Investment Strategy is part of a suite of related documents and focuses predominantly on matters not covered by the Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy.

Investment Indicators

- 7.5 The Authority has set the following quantitative indicators to allow elected Members and the public to assess the Authority's total risk exposure arising from its investment decisions.
- 7.6 **Total risk exposure:** The first indicator shows the Authority's total exposure to potential investment losses. This includes amounts the Authority is contractually committed to lend but have yet to be drawn down and guarantees the Authority has issued over third-party loans.

Table 1 Total investment exposure	31/03/24 Actual	31/03/25 Actual	31/03/26 Forecast
Treasury management investments	41,940	38,900	40,000
Service investments: Loans	26,722	26,637	26,567
Service investments: Shares	3,270	1,960	1,960
Commercial investments: Property	22,295	21,815	21,815
Commercial Investments: Loans	3,491	3,147	2,792
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	97,718	92,459	93,134
Commitments to lend	6,013	6,013	6,013
TOTAL EXPOSURE	103,731	98,472	99,147

- 7.7 The Council has total investments exposure estimated at £98m by March 2025 (£59m excluding treasury management), of which £22m relates to property investment backed by physical assets with an income stream and alternative use. Other investments are loans for economic development purposes; and due to their nature, they are not a material element of our budgeting for interest income within the MTFS.
- 7.8 **How investments are funded:** Currently the Authority's investments are largely funded by usable reserves and income received in advance of expenditure. Prudential borrowing is being used in limited circumstances and performance is closely monitored.

Table 2 Investments funded by borrowing	31/03/24 Actual	31/03/25 Actual	31/03/26 Forecast
Treasury management investments	0	0	0
Service investments: Loans	0	0	0
Service investments: Shares	0	0	0
Commercial investments: Property	20,089	19,330	18,820
Commercial Investments: Loans	3,491	3,147	2,792
TOTAL FUNDED BY BORROWING	23,580	22,477	21,612

- 7.9 **Rate of return received:** In part this indicator shows, for Treasury Management and Commercial Property investments, the investment income received less the associated costs, including the cost of borrowing where appropriate, as a proportion of the sum initially invested. Note that due to the nature of the local government accounting framework, not all recorded gains and losses affect the revenue account in the year they are incurred.

Table 3 Investments net rate of return	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Forecast
Treasury management investments	5.21%	5.10%	4.30%
Service investments: Loans	-2.44%	0.23%	0.00%
Service investments: Shares	NIL	NIL	NIL
Commercial investments: Property	3.20%	3.30%	3.50%
Commercial Investments: Loans	3.13%	3.13%	3.13%

7.10 The return for Service Investments: Loans is not a true return but is instead based largely on the % fluctuation in the underlying value of the new assets within the Life Science Fund. As such they do not reflect actual cashflows. In addition there are a number of non-interest bearing loans.

7.11 Typically, a return on a share would be based upon the dividend yield and there have been no dividends paid. Therefore, this has been shown as Nil. There has been a downward revaluation of property assets at Alderley Park which has impacted the underlying asset value that we show in Table 5 below. We will continue to monitor for signs of recovery, but the underlying asset value remains more than the Authority paid for the shares.

7.12 The major assets included within Commercial Investments: Properties, representing over 90% of the value in that classification, are two commercial retail properties. Whilst we will see fluctuations year-on-year given the pressures on 'bricks and mortar retail', the Council will only experience an impact on its Revenue Account if a site becomes vacant for a prolonged period or is subject to a (lower) rent review.

7.13 From the perspective of the Council one of the tenants affected is a home improvements retailer and the second is a national supermarket retailer. Both tenants have thus far weathered the local economic effects of recent years though we have experienced further reductions in asset value in the last financial year. As the lease term reduces this may continue until the leases are renewed.

7.14 Much of the investment returns for Commercial Investments relates to rent on these two assets. Rental income on both has held up during the year. Overall returns are affected by the need to offset prudential borrowing costs against the income. However, as this is the major income bearing category of investment more attention needs to be diverted to ensure that occupancy and income are maximised and secured for the long term.

7.15 The Commercial investments: Loans are at the expected level of return given the rates in place when they were established.

Treasury Management Investments

7.16 Full details of the Authority's policies and plans for 2025/26 for treasury management investments are covered in the separate Treasury Management Strategy.

Service Investments: Loans

7.17 **Contribution:** The Council lends money to other organisations to support local public services and stimulate economic growth. These are shown below in Table 4. No new loans were issued in the year though there were movements on existing loans and write offs of historic balances.

Table 4 Loans for service purposes Category of borrower	31/03/24 Actual £000	31/03/25 Actual £000	31/03/25 Actual £000	31/03/25 Forecast £000	2025/26 £000
		Balance owing	Loss allowance	Net figure in accounts	Approved Limit
Subsidiaries	0	0	0	0	2,000
Suppliers	23	0	0	0	500
Local businesses	26,470	26,531	61	26,470	30,000
Local charities	158	106	11	95	2,500
TOTAL	26,651	26,637	72	26,565	35,000

Service Investments: Shares

7.18 **Contribution:** The Council invests in the shares of its subsidiaries and local businesses to support local public services and stimulate local economic growth.

7.19 The Authority invested in Alderley Park Holdings Limited to maintain and stimulate this key strategic site within the borough. Cheshire East is a minority 10% shareholder. This should be seen as a long-term strategic investment with no dividend returns. Valuations are based upon the change in value of our share of the underlying assets. There is a lag between the forecasts used for the Investment Strategy and finalisation of the Council's accounts. Consequently, the value fell from a forecast of £3,270K to an actual of £1,960K, a fall in value of £1,310K, or 40%. This fall is continuing and accelerating a downward trend, and steps will be taken to ascertain the strategy for reversing this trend.

7.20 Currently, the valuation (see Table 5) remains greater than the purchase price and the underlying assets at Alderley Park remain strong, with a pipeline of future investments in place. A gain or loss to the Council's Revenue and Capital Receipts accounts would only crystallise in the event of divesting our equity stake.

Table 5 Shares held for service purposes Category of company	31/03/24 actual £000	31/03/25 actual £000	31/03/25 Actual £000	31/03/25 Actual £000	2025/26 £000
---	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	-----------------

	Value in accounts	Amounts invested	Total Gains/ (Losses)	Value in accounts	Approved Limit (at cost)
Local businesses	3,270	1,070	890	1,960	10,000
TOTAL	3,270	1,070	890	1,960	10,000

Commercial Investments: Property

7.21 For the purpose of this Strategy, it should be noted that property is defined as an investment if it is held primarily or partially to generate a profit. To comply with accounting classifications, the Authority includes several assets in Table 6 that might otherwise be excluded as they are not being held to primarily generate a yield or return.

7.22 **Contribution:** The Council invests in local commercial property and land, for a number of reasons. The intention of making a profit that will be spent on local public services is largely a by-product and is not the primary reason.

7.23 We have revisited the historic purchase costs of the assets included in the categories below. For those that were inherited by Cheshire East Council we have used the valuation at 2009/10. This is to allow for a simple calculation of yield.

7.24 The value of properties is updated annually. The most recent valuation is from March 2024 and saw continuing falls to commercial property valuations. The most significant correction came with retail property, and this category is now valued at less than purchase cost. The main driver for the fall in is the reduced number of years remaining on an existing lease. This increases the risk of non-renewal thereby lowering the valuation. The downward trend is expected to continue in 2025 until a new tenancy agreement is agreed. No revised valuation for 2025 is currently available. The figures will be updated in future reports. There has also been a disposal of office property in the year.

Table 6 Property held for investment purposes Property	Actual Purchase cost	31/03/24 actual Gains or (losses) in-year	31/03/24 actual Value in accounts (includes gains/ (losses) to date	31/03/25 expected Gains or (losses)	31/03/25 expected Value in accounts
Industrial Units	1,492	122	1,740	-	1,740
Enterprise Centres	245	20	345	-	345
Retail	23,300	(2,358)	19,730	-	19,730
Office	240	(26)	480	(480)	-
Total	25,277	(2,242)	22,295	(480)	21,815

Commercial Investments: Loans

- 7.25 **Contribution:** The Authority has worked alongside Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Borough Council to each provide Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington Ltd with a £10m loan facility to be used to invest in economic development schemes across the Enterprise Zones in the sub-region.
- 7.26 There is currently one loan in place and has been used to fund development of Alderley Park. The purpose is to stimulate economic development, and payback of the loans will be achieved from Business Rates retained by the LEP under Enterprise Zone regulations. Whilst the balance of the facility is still available there are no imminent plans to draw down further amounts.

Table 7 Loans for commercial purposes Category of borrower	31/03/24 Actual	As at 31/03/25 Actual Balance owing	As at 31/03/25 Actual Loss allowance	As at 31/03/25 Actual Net figure in accounts	2025/26 Approved Limit
Partner Organisations	3,351	3,147	126	3,021	10,000
TOTAL	3,351	3,147	126	3,021	10,000

Loan Commitments and Financial Guarantees

- 7.27 As Accountable Body for Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington, the Council is acting as Entrusted Entity to a £20m European Regional Development Fund supported 'Evergreen' Development Fund, which has issued loans to third parties. The Council, as contracting party, provides guarantees in respect of the amounts provided through ERDF.
- 7.28 The Fund is designed to provide loan finance to specific projects across Cheshire and the north west and will not generate a return for the Authority. The balances are included this year within Service Investments: Loans (see Table 4 above).

Proportionality

- 7.29 A major concern for external governing bodies is the extent to which Authorities are dependent upon investment income to fund services. Proportionality forms a key component of the Prudential Code.
- 7.30 Historically, the Authority has not been materially dependent on return-generating investment activity to achieve a balanced revenue budget. However, in the context of the current financial situation faced by the Authority and the sector, those returns will become an important factor in the ability to set a balanced budget. Whilst the proportion of the net revenue budget was consistently low and deemed immaterial this could change and should it fail to achieve the expected net return, the Authority's contingency plans for continuing to provide these services include effective budget management and tight cost control could become more difficult to achieve. Therefore, more emphasis needs to be placed on managing the portfolio and securing an income stream or reviewing exit strategies.

Capacity, Skills and Culture

- 7.31 **Elected Members and Statutory Officers:** Adequate steps are taken to ensure that those elected Members and statutory officers involved in the investment decision making process have appropriate capacity, skills and information to enable them to: 1. take informed decisions as to whether to enter into a specific investment; 2. to consider individual assessments in the context of the strategic objectives and risk profile of the local authority; and 3. to enable them to understand how the quantum of these decisions have changed the overall risk exposure of the local authority.
- 7.32 The Finance Sub-Committee comprising Members, supported by officers and where necessary external advisors, provides oversight of the Investment Strategy and acts on recommendations from officers that consider opportunities to enhance the Revenue and Capital Budgets of the Council through strategic investments, whether that involves using capital / cash resources or borrowing and lending powers.
- 7.33 **Commercial deals:** Steps have been taken to ensure that those negotiating and reporting commercial deals are aware of the core principles of the prudential framework and of the regulatory regime within which local authorities operate. A team of officers from Place, Finance, Legal, and Procurement are responsible for ensuring that the framework is followed. Where appropriate staff are provided with additional training and up to date skills via CIPFA and other providers.
- 7.34 **Corporate governance:** Corporate governance arrangements have been put in place to ensure accountability, responsibility and authority for decision making on investment activities within the context of the Council's corporate values and Constitution.

ANNEX 2



Grants Register 2024/25

Results to end of March 2025

Corporate Grants Register 2024/25

Children & Families Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
Children & Families: Schools - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)				
Dedicated Schools Grant	183,309,155	178,734,274	-4,574,881	FR3
Pupil Premium Grant	4,958,000	5,018,268	60,268	
Pupil Premium Plus - Post 16 Funding	56,000	92,075	36,075	
Sixth Forms Grant	2,892,000	2,932,912	40,912	
Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM)	1,928,000	1,832,376	-95,624	
Primary Physical Education Sports Grant	982,000	947,911	-34,089	
Teachers Pay Additional Grant	0	1,677,984	1,677,984	FR1
Teachers Pension Grant	0	2,617,416	2,617,416	FR1
COVID-19 Recovery Premium	900,000	245,118	-654,882	
School Led Tutoring Grant	295,000	98,335	-196,666	
School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant FY 2025-26 - carried- forward	0	-264,917	-264,917	
School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant FY 2023-24	0	364,002	364,002	
Milk Subsidy	21,000	0	-21,000	
Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG)	0	2,502,001	2,502,001	See Table 1 above
Senior Mental Health Lead Training Grant	0	15,600	15,600	
S14 Experts and Mentors Programme Grant - carried-forward	0	6,500	6,500	
Delivering Better Value in SEND	408,000	115,234	-292,766	
National Professional Qualification Grant	0	15,800	15,800	
Early Years Supplementary Grant	0	-45,570	-45,570	
Early Years Budget Grant	0	202,522	202,522	
Early Years Teachers Pay Additional Grant	0	146,161	146,161	
Total Children & Families: Schools - Ring- fenced (specific purpose)	195,749,155	197,254,002	1,504,847	
Children & Families: Children's Services - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)				
Asylum Seekers	3,700,000	2,946,667	-753,333	
Asylum Seekers - difference between estimated grant income relating to 2023/24 and actual	0	111,651	111,651	
Supporting Families (previously Tackling Troubled Families) Payment By Results	0	409,600	409,600	
Supporting Families (Payments by Results) Upfront Grant	720,000	785,100	65,100	

Children & Families Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
Supporting Families Payments by Results/Upfront Grant - Carry forward to 2025-2026	0	-1,729,854	-1,729,854	
Reducing Parental Conflict Grant - Accrual Reversal from 2023-2024	0	-13,320	-13,320	
Reducing Parental Conflict Grant	0	39,268	39,268	
Adoption Support Fund	70,000	137,257	67,257	
KS2 Moderation & KS1 Phonics	11,000	10,803	-197	
Independent Support Grant (CEIAS) FY2025-2026 c/f from previous years	0	-12,228	-12,228	
Independent Support Grant (CEIAS) FY2023-2024	0	12,228	12,228	
Skills & Lifelong Learning FY2025-2026 c/f from previous years	0	-163,355	-163,355	
Skills & Lifelong Learning FY2024-2025	897,000	995,113	98,113	
Supporting Families; Investing in Practice programme (Mockingbird Family Model)	0	115,284	115,284	
Remand Grant	107,000	120,308	13,308	
Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Housing Grant - carried-forward	0	-111,086	-111,086	
Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Housing Grant	676,000	675,643	-357	
Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Housing Grant - brought-forward	0	148,545	148,545	
Holiday Activities & Food Programme Grant	906,000	906,480	480	
Holiday Activities & Food Programme Grant - Grant carried forward to 2025-2026 for clawback	0	-50,258	-50,258	
Holiday Activities & Food Programme Grant adjustment 2023/24	0	141,202	141,202	
S31 Kinship Grant	0	20,000	20,000	
S31 Kinship Grant - Grant carried forward to 2025-26	0	-20,000	-20,000	
S31 Extension of the Role of Virtual School Heads to children with a social worker 2024/25	118,000	118,136	136	
S31 Extension of the Role of Virtual School Heads to children with a social worker 2024/25 - c/f to 2025/26	0	-118,136	-118,136	
S31 Extension of the Role of Virtual School Heads to children with a social worker 2023/24 - b/f prev year	0	118,136	118,136	
S31 Extension of the Role of Virtual School Heads to children with a social worker 2023/24 - c/f to 2025/26	0	-73,017	-73,017	
S31 Extension of the Role of Virtual School Heads to children with a social worker 2022-2023 - c/f from prev year	0	100,281	100,281	
Covid 19 - Recovery Premium Grant	0	51,286	51,286	

Children & Families Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
Covid 19 - Recovery Premium Grant - carried-forward	0	-51,286	-51,286	
Household Support Fund - Grant RIA 2023-2024 - To be clawed back in 2024- 2025	0	43,312	43,312	
Household Support Fund - Grant received in year 2024-25 (incl clawback)	0	2,871,396	2,871,396	FR1/FR2
Household Support Fund - Grant Debtor 2024-25	0	1,493,076	1,493,076	FR1/FR2
Hong Kong UK Welcome Programme (British Nationals)	0	33,129	33,129	
Early Years - Delivery Support Fund - Carried forward from 2023-2024	0	90,278	90,278	
Early Years - Delivery Support Fund carried forward to 2025-26	0	-19,144	-19,144	
Early Years - Professional Development Programme	0	68,192	68,192	
Early Years - Professional Development Programme - Grant carried forward	0	-29,156	-29,156	
Early Years - Experts and Mentors Programme	0	7,050	7,050	
Early Years - Wraparound Childcare Programme	0	64,932	64,932	
Early Years - Wraparound Childcare Programme	587,000	516,397	-70,603	
Early Years - Wraparound Childcare Programme - Carry forward to 2025-2026	0	-350,172	-350,172	
Family Hubs Transformation Funding - Carried forward from 2023-2024	0	492,103	492,103	
Family Hubs Transformation Funding 2024-25	0	90,200	90,200	
Family Hubs Transformation Funding 2024-25 - Transferred to capital	0	-115,000	-115,000	
Family Hubs Transformation Funding 2024-25 - C/F to 2025-26	0	-38,892	-38,892	
Leaving Care Allowance Uplift Implementation Grant (New Burdens)	72,000	72,022	22	
Staying Close Award	602,000	602,060	60	
Staying Close Award - carried forward	0	-123,520	-123,520	
Supported Accommodation New Burdens Grant	174,000	619,672	445,672	
Enhance Programme Funding	350,000	330,244	-19,756	
Befriending and Mentoring Programme	0	316,599	316,599	
Social Worker Apprenticeship	0	1,125	1,125	
Total Children & Families: Children's Services - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)	8,990,000	12,656,352	3,666,352	
Children & Families: Children's Services - Unring-fenced (general purpose)				
Social Care Support Grant (Children)	9,166,000	9,216,863	50,863	
Staying Put Implementation Grant	0	130,125	130,125	

Children & Families Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
Extended Rights to Free Transport (Home to School Transport)	0	324,300	324,300	
Extended Personal Adviser Duty Implementation	0	57,414	57,414	
Extension of the role of Virtual School Heads	0	60,595	60,595	
Total Children & Families: Children's Services - Unring-fenced (general purpose)	9,166,000	9,789,297	623,297	

Adults & Health Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
Adults & Health - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)				
Additional Better Care (for Adult Social Care)	8,706,000	8,705,871	-129	
Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund	979,000	979,180	180	
Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund - top-up	4,098,000	4,267,358	169,358	
Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund - Workforce Element	1,100,000	1,100,000	0	
Discharge Fund	2,021,000	2,034,248	13,248	
Multiply - Supported Employment - brought-forward	0	135,235	135,235	
Multiply - Supported Employment	536,000	414,483	-121,517	
Multiply - Supported Employment - carried-forward	0	-40,747	-40,747	
Supported Internship Grant	0	28,465	28,465	
Asylum Dispersal Scheme - brought forward	0	343,982	343,982	
Asylum Dispersal Scheme	0	459,000	459,000	FR2
Asylum Dispersal Scheme - carried forward	0	-496,156	-496,156	
Afghan - Wrap Around support - brought-forward	0	431,050	431,050	
Afghan - Wrap Around support - carried-forward	0	-153,381	-153,381	
Afghan - Resettlement support - brought-forward	0	403,723	403,723	

Adults & Health Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
Afghan - Resettlement support	132,000	501,215	369,215	
Afghan - Resettlement support - carried-forward	0	-1,044,138	-1,044,138	
Afghan - Integration Support	0	107,150	107,150	
Homes for Ukraine Scheme - brought-forward	0	211,411	211,411	
Homes for Ukraine Scheme	0	754,668	754,668	See Table 2 above
Homes for Ukraine Scheme - carried-forward	0	-166,300	-166,300	
Private Finance Initiative (PFI) credits	4,125,000	4,124,787	-213	
Private Finance Initiative (PFI) credits (Beechmere) - carried-forward	0	-1,288,996	-1,288,996	
National Grant from DHSC to fund LAs to create additional ASC apprenticeships	0	30,000	30,000	
Total Adults & Health - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)	21,697,000	21,842,108	145,108	
Adults & Health - Unring-fenced (general purpose)				
Social Care Support Grant (Adults)	16,414,000	16,385,551	-28,449	
Local Reform & Community Voices	207,000	207,874	874	
Social Care in Prisons	73,000	67,956	-5,044	
War Pension Scheme Disregard	60,000	58,635	-1,365	
Total Adults & Health - Unring-fenced (general purpose)	16,754,000	16,720,016	-33,984	
Adults & Health: Public Health - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)				
Public Health Grant	18,345,000	18,344,755	-245	
Public Health Grant - Top up	0	281,960	281,960	
OHID SSMTR Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Grant	0	524,528	524,528	FR1
North West Probation Service funding for SMS rehabilitative and resettlement interventions	72,000	123,182	51,182	
CHAMPS Marmot Place Funding - encourage pregnant women to stop smoking - brought-forward	0	21,500	21,500	
CHAMPS SMS - inpatient detox	0	159,253	159,253	
Reducing cardio-vascular disease in Cheshire East	0	6,000	6,000	
Local stop smoking services and support	0	432,331	432,331	
Local stop smoking services and support - carried-forward	0	-42,850	-42,850	
Total Adults & Health: Public Health - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)	18,417,000	19,850,659	1,433,659	

Corporate Policy Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
Corporate Policy - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)				
Revenues and Housing Benefits:				
Housing Benefit Subsidy	53,221,000	55,451,715	2,230,715	See Table 1 above
Discretionary Housing Payments Grant	349,000	348,661	-339	
Housing Benefit (HB) Award Accuracy Initiative	29,000	26,926	-2,074	
LADS - VEP (RTI) funding	14,000	8,071	-5,929	
New Burdens: Universal Credit, maintenance & natural migration	24,000	24,005	5	
Local Authority Data Sharing (LADS)	0	733	733	
LADS - New Burdens - Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)	60,000	59,230	-770	
LADS - New Burdens - Benefit Cap	1,000	213	-787	
LADS - New Burdens - Single Fraud Investigation	0	911	911	
LADS - New Burdens - Single Housing Benefit Extract Automation	1,000	13,009	12,009	
Additional funding for the Verify Earnings and Pensions service for the financial year ending March 2025	0	4,704	4,704	
Additional New Burden: terminating Employment Support Allowance with Housing Benefit claims 2024/25	0	10,377	10,377	
HB Review Admin Payment	0	236	236	
Business Rates Reliefs Grant - NNDR1	23,442,000	10,629,000	-12,813,000	
Business Rates Reliefs Grant - additional at NNDR3	0	-940,052	-940,052	
New Burdens Administration Grant	0	27,640	27,640	
Democratic Services:				
Police and Crime Commissioner's Panel grant	0	65,260	65,260	
Police And Crime Commissioner Election 2021 Grant	0	84,427	84,427	
Finance and Customer Services:				
Redmond Review	0	51,396	51,396	
Cyber Support Grant	0	3,418	3,418	
Client-Level Data Flows Support	0	0	0	
Total Corporate Policy - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)	77,141,000	65,869,880	-11,271,120	
Corporate Policy - Unring-fenced (general purpose)				
Housing Benefit Administration Subsidy	720,000	706,572	-13,428	
NNDR Administration Allowance	586,652	578,438	-8,214	
New Homes Bonus	4,084,880	4,084,880	0	
Services Grant	271,000	296,984	25,984	
Local Government Transparency Code	0	13,071	13,071	
Debt Charges (Ministry of Justice)	0	38,882	38,882	
Electoral Integrity New Burdens	0	82,055	82,055	
Revenue Support Grant	414,000	414,069	69	

Corporate Policy Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
Business Rates Levy Surplus	0	356,734	356,734	
Total Corporate Policy - Unring-fenced (general purpose)	6,076,532	6,571,685	495,153	

Place Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
Economy & Growth - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)				
Rough Sleeping Initiative	0	179,879	179,879	
Rough Sleeping Initiative	0	41,952	41,952	
Homelessness Prevention Grant	0	815,676	815,676	FR1
Homelessness Prevention Grant	0	238,686	238,686	FR1
Local Authority Housing Fund	0	3,230	3,230	
Shared Prosperity Fund - brought-forward	0	1,064,784	1,064,784	
Shared Prosperity Fund	5,868,000	2,634,087	-3,233,913	
Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington (ECW): Growth Hub Funding	0	234,285	234,285	
Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington (ECW): NP (Northern Powerhouse) 11	0	261,000	261,000	
Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington (ECW): Skills Bootcamp	0	2,229,214	2,229,214	FR3
Natural England - Stewardship scheme	2,000	1,690	-310	
Natural England - Stewardship scheme	7,000	7,512	512	
Apprentice Incentive Scheme	0	500	500	
Natural England - Stewardship scheme	0	111,020	111,020	
Total Economy & Growth - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)	5,877,000	7,823,515	1,946,515	
Environment & Communities - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)				
Bikeability Grant	0	294,307	294,307	
Planning Skills Delivery Fund - brought forward	0	100,000	100,000	
Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums)	0	30,000	30,000	
Air Quality Grant (Cycling) - brought- forward	0	4,047	4,047	
Section 31 grant - Biodiversity net gain	0	43,467	43,467	
DLUHC - Mobile Home Fit and Proper Person Test grant - brought forward	0	250	250	
XL Bully Ban Implementation Fund	0	6,759	6,759	
Fly Tipping Intervention	0	9,330	9,330	
Total Environment & Communities - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)	0	488,160	488,160	
Highways & Transport - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)				
Bus Capacity Grant - brought-forward	0	158,571	158,571	

Place Name of Grants received	Original Budget	Final Outturn	Change from Original Budget	Suppleme ntary Revenue Estimate reported
Bus Capacity Grant - carried-forward	0	-94,884	-94,884	
Bus Recovery Grant - brought-forward	0	150,000	150,000	
Bus Capability Grant - brought-forward	0	0	0	
Local Transport Fund	0	218,883	218,883	
Bus Support Grant - brought-forward	0	0	0	
Bus Support Grant	0	347,865	347,865	
Active Travel Capability Fund - brought-forward	0	196,339	196,339	
Active Travel Capability Fund - carried-forward	0	-49,856	-49,856	
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) - brought forward	0	229,510	229,510	
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) - 2024-25	0	159,490	159,490	
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) - carried forward	0	-377,471	-377,471	
Bus Service Improvement Plan+ (BSIP+) - brought forward	0	1,178,350	1,178,350	
Bus Service Improvement Plan+ (BSIP+) - Phase 2	0	1,187,596	1,187,596	FR1
Bus Service Improvement Plan+ (BSIP+) - Phase 3	0	2,268,000	2,268,000	FR1
Bus Service Improvement Plan+ (BSIP+) - Transfer to Capital	0	-450,000	-450,000	
Bus Service Improvement Plan+ (BSIP+) - carried forward	0	-3,448,795	-3,448,795	
Bus Fare Cap Grant - brought forward	0	1,415	1,415	
Bus Fare Cap - Mikro	0	1,474	1,474	
Bus Fare Cap 2024-25	0	1,543	1,543	
Bus Fare Cap 2024-25 additional	0	2,509	2,509	
Rural Mobility Fund - brought-forward	0	241,950	241,950	
Highways Tree Survey	0	3,359	3,359	
Total Highways & Transport - Ring-fenced (specific purpose)	0	1,925,848	1,925,848	
Total Ring-fenced Grants	327,871,155	327,710,523	-160,632	
Total Unring-fenced Grants	31,996,532	33,080,998	1,084,466	

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Capital Programme 2024/25

Results to end of March 2025

Adults & Health

CAPITAL

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024/28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Adults Services													
Community - Rural Shared Prosperity	361	81	280	0	0	0	280	280	0	0	0	0	280
Electronic Call Monitoring System	389	0	0	389	0	0	389	0	0	389	0	0	389
People Planner System	94	43	0	51	0	0	51	51	0	0	0	0	51
Replacement Care4CE Devices	93	65	0	28	0	0	28	28	0	0	0	0	28
Total Committed Schemes	937	189	280	468	0	0	748	359	0	389	0	0	748
Total Adults and Health Schemes	937	189	280	468	0	0	748	359	0	389	0	0	748

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024/28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Childrens Social Care													
Foster Carers Capacity Scheme	534	434	34	67	0	0	101	0	0	0	0	101	101
Crewe Youth Zone	4,826	395	175	4,256	0	0	4,431	3,584	0	0	0	847	4,431
Family Hubs Transformation	282	124	158	0	0	0	158	158	0	0	0	0	158
Children's Home Sufficiency Scheme	1,404	204	155	1,046	0	0	1,200	0	0	0	0	1,200	1,200
Strong Start, Family Help & Integration													
Early Years Sufficiency Capital Fund	1,036	943	42	50	0	0	92	92	0	0	0	0	92
Childcare Capital Expansion	749	0	9	740	0	0	749	749	0	0	0	0	749
Education and 14-19 Skills													
Adelaide Academy	904	55	13	835	0	0	848	678	0	0	0	170	848
Basic Need Grant Allocation	7,551	10	7	7,534	0	0	7,541	7,541	0	0	0	0	7,541
Brine Leas High School	709	5	705	0	0	0	705	705	0	0	0	0	705
Cledford House	11	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Congleton Planning Area	4,523	4,521	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2
Congleton Planning Area - Primary (1)	2,209	179	0	2,030	0	0	2,030	764	1,266	0	0	0	2,030
Congleton Planning Area - Primary (2)	628	574	6	49	0	0	55	55	0	0	0	0	55
Congleton Planning Area - Primary (3)	7,504	4	0	49	2,200	5,250	7,499	4,299	3,200	0	0	0	7,499
Devolved Formula Grant - Schools	1,533	0	443	780	310	0	1,533	1,533	0	0	0	0	1,533
Energy Efficiency Grant - Schools	672	391	165	116	0	0	280	280	0	0	0	0	280
Future Schemes - Feasibility Studies	250	25	99	126	0	0	225	225	0	0	0	0	225
Handforth Planning Area - New School	13,003	3	6	494	4,000	8,499	12,999	135	12,864	0	0	0	12,999
Holmes Chapel Secondary School	3,659	3,664	-5	0	0	0	-5	-5	0	0	0	0	-5
Little Angels Satellite Sites	29	21	0	8	0	0	8	8	0	0	0	0	8

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024/28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Education and 14-19 Skills													
Macclesfield Academy Resource Provision	103	3	0	100	0	0	100	100	0	0	0	0	100
Macclesfield Planning Area - Secondary	1,157	1,148	10	0	0	0	10	0	10	0	0	0	10
Macclesfield Planning Area - Secondary New	731	5	1	725	0	0	725	725	0	0	0	0	725
Macclesfield Planning Area - New School	4,001	1	0	0	0	4,000	4,000	0	4,000	0	0	0	4,000
Malbank High School	1,922	1,897	0	25	0	0	25	25	0	0	0	0	25
Mobberley Primary School	1,208	35	2	609	561	0	1,172	872	0	0	300	0	1,172
Nantwich Planning Area (Primary Schools - 210	9,061	733	60	7,768	500	0	8,328	5,308	3,020	0	0	0	8,328
Oakfield Lodge & Stables	50	12	0	37	0	0	38	38	0	0	0	0	38
Poynton Planning Area	1,500	13	8	1,479	0	0	1,487	684	803	0	0	0	1,487
Provision of Sufficient School Places - SEND (Springfield Crewe)	7,182	3,861	3,113	208	0	0	3,322	0	0	0	0	3,322	3,322
Puss Bank SEN Expansion	532	520	0	12	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	12	12
Provision of SEN Unit - Wistaston Primary School	1,523	169	1,354	0	0	0	1,354	1,054	0	0	0	300	1,354
Sandbach Boys School	18	20	-2	0	0	0	-2	-2	0	0	0	0	-2
Sandbach Primary Academy	1,583	106	806	671	0	0	1,477	1,477	0	0	0	0	1,477
Schools Condition Capital Grant	7,600	1,227	199	4,175	2,000	0	6,373	6,373	0	0	0	0	6,373
SEN/High Needs Capital Allocation	4,790	168	19	4,603	0	0	4,622	4,622	0	0	0	0	4,622
Shavington Planning Area - New Primary School	8,040	156	6	1,094	6,784	0	7,884	5,549	2,335	0	0	0	7,884
Shavington Planning Area - Secondary	3,522	2,883	639	0	0	0	639	639	0	0	0	0	639
Springfield Satellite Site (Dean Row)	6,112	5,934	-114	292	0	0	178	0	0	0	0	178	178
The Dingle PS Expansion	1,395	1,135	238	22	0	0	260	260	0	0	0	0	260
Tytherington High School	2,806	172	36	2,597	0	0	2,633	2,633	0	0	0	0	2,633
Various SEN Sites - Small Works/Adaptations	150	0	1	149	0	0	150	150	0	0	0	0	150
Wheellock Primary School	2,411	201	689	1,521	0	0	2,210	1,751	460	0	0	0	2,210
Wilmslow High School BN	14,179	12,355	433	1,391	0	0	1,825	487	1,290	0	0	48	1,825
Wilmslow Primary Planning Area	626	1	0	625	0	0	625	125	500	0	0	0	625
Total Committed Schemes	134,219	44,319	9,513	46,283	16,356	17,749	89,901	53,675	29,747	0	300	6,178	89,901

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024/28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
New Schemes													
Education and 14-19 Skills													
New Satellite Special School - 1	6,000	0	17	5,983	0	0	6,000	6,000	0	0	0	0	6,000
New Satellite school - 2	9,000	0	13	987	5,000	3,000	9,000	9,000	0	0	0	0	9,000
New SEN places - 1	1,089	0	4	1,086	0	0	1,089	1,089	0	0	0	0	1,089
New SEN places - 2	25	0	0	25	0	0	25	25	0	0	0	0	25
New SEN places - 3	163	0	141	22	0	0	163	163	0	0	0	0	163
SEN New Free School	998	0	10	740	248	0	998	998	0	0	0	0	998
Gainsborough Primary - Flooring	304	0	17	287	0	0	304	304	0	0	0	0	304
New AP Free School	500	0	3	497	0	0	500	500	0	0	0	0	500
Leighton SEND Reception Adaptations	26	0	0	26	0	0	26	26	0	0	0	0	26
Park Lane Refurbishment additional SEND places	200	0	5	195	0	0	200	200	0	0	0	0	200
Total New Schemes	18,305	0	209	9,848	5,248	3,000	18,305	18,305	0	0	0	0	18,305
Total Children and Families Schemes	152,524	44,319	9,722	56,131	21,604	20,749	108,205	71,980	29,747	0	300	6,178	108,205

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
Committed Schemes in progress													
ICT Services													
Accelerate Digital	1,460	0	282	1,177	0	0	1,460	0	0	0	0	1,460	1,460
Care Act Phase 2	6,314	4,599	657	1,058	0	0	1,715	0	0	0	0	1,715	1,715
Digital Customer Enablement	3,102	2,424	516	163	0	0	678	0	0	0	0	678	678
ICT Device Replacement	1,912	683	454	776	0	0	1,229	0	0	0	0	1,229	1,229
ICT Hybrid Model	3,449	445	1,314	1,690	0	0	3,004	0	0	0	0	3,004	3,004
IADM (Information Assurance and Data)	19,465	16,421	1,035	2,009	0	0	3,044	0	0	0	0	3,044	3,044
Infrastructure Investment Programme (IIP)	34,429	31,065	311	2,223	830	0	3,364	0	0	0	0	3,364	3,364
Vendor Management	1,006	765	3	239	0	0	241	0	0	0	0	241	241
Finance & Customer Services													
Core Financials	11,317	9,365	894	765	293	0	1,952	0	0	0	0	1,952	1,952
Strategic Capital Projects		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vendor Management - Phase 2	99	24	0	25	50	0	75	0	0	0	0	75	75
Total Committed Schemes	82,553	65,790	5,465	10,125	1,173	0	16,764	0	0	0	0	16,764	16,764
Total Corporate Policy Schemes	82,553	65,790	5,465	10,125	1,173	0	16,764	0	0	0	0	16,764	16,764

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Facilities Management													
Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund - FM 3	5,214	5,023	121	70	0	0	191	0	0	0	0	191	191
PSDS - 3B - Lot 1	1,028	77	135	815	0	0	951	827	0	0	0	123	951
PSDS - 3B - Lot 3 (schools)	4,390	3,267	87	1,036	0	0	1,123	1,056	0	67	0	0	1,123
Septic Tanks	636	285	6	94	251	0	351	0	0	0	0	351	351
Schools Capital Maintenance	8,315	5,575	213	2,527	0	0	2,740	2,459	0	281	0	0	2,740
Corporate Landlord - Operational	999	996	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4	4
Premises Capital (FM)	39,587	32,530	1,516	4,393	1,149	0	7,058	0	0	0	0	7,058	7,058
Poynton Pool Spillway	1,380	468	95	816	0	0	912	0	0	27	0	884	912
Housing													
Crewe Towns Fund - Warm and Healthy Homes	2,126	31	130	1,965	0	0	2,095	2,095	0	0	0	0	2,095
Disabled Facilities	22,884	10,181	3,859	3,244	2,800	2,800	12,703	11,435	341	0	0	928	12,703
Green Homes Grant	3,030	2,378	72	242	339	0	652	652	0	0	0	0	652
Gypsy and Traveller Sites	4,136	2,938	1,120	78	0	0	1,198	175	0	0	0	1,023	1,198
Home Repairs Vulnerable People	1,458	870	117	471	0	0	588	119	33	0	0	436	588
Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2	4,416	740	1,354	2,322	0	0	3,675	3,666	9	0	0	0	3,675
Local Authority Housing Fund	731	293	129	309	0	0	438	438	0	0	0	0	438
Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund	1,565	1,557	8	0	0	0	8	8	0	0	0	0	8
Sustainable Warmth - Home Upgrade Grant not	1,584	1,557	14	14	0	0	28	40	-12	0	0	0	28
Temporary Accommodation	1,479	1,069	7	403	0	0	410	0	164	246	0	0	410
Warm Homes Fund	239	213	5	21	0	0	26	26	0	0	0	0	26
Estates													
Corporate Landlord - Non-Operational	1,336	0	0	1,336	0	0	1,336	0	0	0	0	1,336	1,336
Malkins Bank Landfill Site	1,360	661	121	577	0	0	699	0	0	0	0	699	699
Farms Strategy	2,910	1,689	0	385	209	626	1,220	0	0	0	1,220	0	1,220

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28													
Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Economic Development													
Crewe Towns Fund - Repurposing Our High	1,132	162	364	288	318	0	970	970	0	0	0	0	970
Crewe Towns Fund - Flag Lane Baths	1,968	583	20	1,365	0	0	1,385	32	0	0	0	1,353	1,385
Crewe Towns Fund - Mill Street Corridor	4,477	684	795	2,998	0	0	3,793	3,793	0	0	0	0	3,793
Crewe Towns Fund - Mirion St	1,190	164	901	125	0	0	1,026	1,026	0	0	0	0	1,026
Crewe Towns Fund - Crewe Youth Zone non-	351	125	121	105	0	0	226	226	0	0	0	0	226
History Centre Public Realm & ICV (Crewe Towns Fund) CTC1	580	10	18	152	400	0	570	570	0	0	0	0	570
Handforth Heat Network	13,219	17	18	695	450	12,039	13,202	2,587	7,428	0	0	3,187	13,202
Demolition of Crewe Library & Concourse CTC10	3,396	859	2,379	159	0	0	2,538	1,015	0	0	0	1,523	2,538
Future High Street Funding - CEC Innovation Centre	4,251	530	3,431	291	0	0	3,721	3,721	0	0	0	0	3,721
Crewe Town Centre Regeneration	32,333	30,993	17	1,323	0	0	1,340	239	64	0	0	1,037	1,340
South Macclesfield Development Area	34,630	3,259	24	176	0	31,171	31,371	10,000	10,000	0	11,371	0	31,371
North Cheshire Garden Village	57,866	7,026	2,504	9,345	17,285	21,706	50,840	20,165	0	0	21,700	8,975	50,840
Handforth Garden Village s106 Obligations	6,841	0	0	0	2,740	4,101	6,841	0	0	0	0	6,841	6,841
Leighton Green	2,096	1,468	26	601	0	0	628	0	0	0	0	628	628
Connecting Cheshire Phase 3	8,000	128	593	2,207	2,200	2,872	7,872	0	7,872	0	0	0	7,872
Connecting Cheshire 2020	9,250	5,680	0	585	0	2,985	3,570	5,172	0	0	0	-1,601	3,570
UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Core	1,304	202	1,102	0	0	0	1,102	1,102	0	0	0	0	1,102
Macclesfield Indoor Market Toilet Refurbishment	191	186	5	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5	5
Macclesfield Town Centre	1,859	1,858	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Culture & Tourism													
Cattle Handling Facility - Oakwood Farm	405	367	38	0	0	0	38	0	0	38	0	0	38
Countryside Vehicles	1,579	700	26	419	217	217	879	0	0	0	0	879	879
Culture & Tourism S106 Schemes	766	124	40	327	216	59	642	0	642	0	0	0	642
New Archives Premises CTC1	10,256	442	1,124	8,450	240	0	9,814	0	0	0	0	9,814	9,814
PROW Capital Works	1,138	1,042	85	11	0	0	96	96	0	0	0	0	96
PROW CMM A6 MARR	100	69	1	30	0	0	31	31	0	0	0	0	31
PROW Flood Damage Investment	72	71	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Visitor Economy - Rural Shared Prosperity Fund	465	113	352	0	0	0	352	352	0	0	0	0	352
Tatton Park Investment Phase 2	3,280	1,434	11	1,109	725	0	1,845	0	0	0	0	1,845	1,845
Total Committed Schemes	313,801	130,694	23,110	51,882	29,539	78,575	183,106	74,095	26,540	658	34,291	47,522	183,106

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
New Schemes in 24-25													
Facilities Management													
PSDS - 3C	1,671	0	86	1,585	0	0	1,671	1,448	0	0	0	223	1,671
Estates													
Workplace	1,000	0	255	745	0	0	1,000	1,000	0	0	0	0	1,000
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing													
Warm Homes Local Grant (DESNZ)	7,793	0	0	1,354	3,252	3,187	7,793	7,793	0	0	0	0	7,793
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Economic Development													
Macclesfield Indoor Market Refurbishment (MIMR)	2,496	40	1,858	598	0	0	2,456	2,358	0	0	0	98	2,456
Macc on Foot (MOF)	417	5	413	0	0	0	413	413	0	0	0	0	413
Nantwich Town Centre Public Realm	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	100	0	0	0	100
Culture & Tourism													
Green Structures Investment	384	0	0	271	113	0	384	0	0	0	0	384	384
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total New Schemes	13,862	45	2,613	4,652	3,366	3,187	13,817	13,012	100	0	0	706	13,817
Total Growth & Enterprise	327,663	130,740	25,723	56,533	32,905	81,762	196,923	87,107	26,640	658	34,291	48,228	196,924

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Environment Services													
Bereavement Service Data System	35	7	0	28	0	0	28	0	0	28	0	0	28
Booth Bed Lane, Goostrey	140	0	0	140	0	0	140	100	40	0	0	0	140
Bosley Village Play Area	20	0	0	20	0	0	20	0	20	0	0	0	20
Browns Lane Play Area 2024/25	12	0	0	12	0	0	12	0	12	0	0	0	12
Carbon Offset Investment	568	137	403	29	0	0	431	0	0	0	0	431	431
Carnival Fields	42	0	0	42	0	0	42	0	42	0	0	0	42
Chelford Village Hall Open Space and Sport Improvements	121	119	-0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
Chelford Village Hall Phase 2	61	0	0	61	0	0	61	0	61	0	0	0	61
Cremator Flue Gas Modifications	30	0	19	11	0	0	30	0	0	0	0	30	30
Crewe Crematorium and Macclesfield Crematorium Major	30	14	4	12	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	16	16
Elworth Park	52	0	2	50	0	0	52	0	52	0	0	0	52
Energy Improvements at Cledford Lane	985	908	6	71	0	0	77	0	0	0	0	77	77
Fleet EV Transition	6,897	39	951	3,580	327	2,000	6,858	0	0	0	0	6,858	6,858
Fleet Vehicle Electric Charging	585	155	3	286	140	0	430	0	0	0	0	430	430
Future High Street Funding - Sustainable Energy Network	1,566	1,148	202	216	0	0	418	418	0	0	0	0	418
Green Investment Scheme (Solar Farm)	4,150	2,279	1,180	536	155	0	1,871	0	0	0	0	1,871	1,871
Grounds Maintenance Management ICT System	121	101	-42	62	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	20	20
Household Bins Schemes	292	0	292	0	0	0	292	0	0	292	0	0	292
Household Waste Recycling Centres	860	48	36	776	0	0	812	0	0	0	0	812	812
Jim Evison Playing Fields	161	0	19	142	0	0	161	0	161	0	0	0	161
Litter and Recycling Bins	208	119	0	42	25	22	89	0	0	0	0	89	89
Longridge Open Space Improvement Project	66	0	0	66	0	0	66	0	66	0	0	0	66
Macclesfield Chapel Refurbishment	429	22	0	407	0	0	407	0	0	407	0	0	407
Main Road, Langley	259	0	3	257	0	0	259	0	259	0	0	0	259
Newtown Sports Facilities Improvements	99	81	12	6	0	0	18	0	18	0	0	0	18

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Environment Services													
Park Development Fund	846	670	0	89	87	0	176	0	0	0	0	176	176
Park Lane, Poynton	39	0	39	0	0	0	39	0	39	0	0	0	39
Park Play, Meriton Road & Stanley Hall	10	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	10	0	0	0	10
Pastures Wood De-carbonisation	51	35	4	13	0	0	16	0	0	16	0	0	16
Pear Tree Play Area, Stapeley Improvements	7	1	6	0	0	0	6	0	4	0	0	1	6
Queens Park Bowling Green	17	0	2	15	0	0	17	0	2	0	0	15	17
Rotherhead Drive Open Space and Play Area	141	117	0	24	0	0	24	0	24	0	0	0	24
Rugby Drive, Macclesfield	71	0	24	47	0	0	71	0	71	0	0	0	71
Shaw Heath Recreation Ground	22	3	12	6	0	0	19	0	19	0	0	0	19
Solar Energy Generation	13,980	91	12	297	300	13,279	13,889	0	0	0	0	13,889	13,889
Stanley Hall Improvements	55	0	53	2	0	0	55	20	35	0	0	0	55
The Carrs Improvement Project	61	0	0	61	0	0	61	0	61	0	0	0	61
The Moor, Knutsford	36	0	32	4	0	0	36	0	17	0	0	19	36
Tytherington Public Art	10	0	10	0	0	0	10	0	10	0	0	0	10
Unsafe Cemetery Memorials	35	9	0	26	0	0	26	0	0	0	0	26	26
Victoria Park Amenity Improvements	20	9	3	8	0	0	11	0	11	0	0	0	11
Victoria Park Pitch Improvements	29	28	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
West Park Open Space & Sports Improvements	120	23	22	75	0	0	98	0	98	0	0	0	98
Wilmslow Town Council - Villas	47	0	47	0	0	0	47	0	13	0	0	34	47
Woodland South of Coppice Way, Handforth	89	68	0	21	0	0	21	0	21	0	0	0	21
Wynbunbury Parish Open Space	5	1	0	4	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	4
Wybunbury St Chad's Closed Cemetery	219	0	0	219	0	0	219	0	0	0	0	219	219
Neighbourhood Services													
Congleton Leisure Centre	13,000	12,963	11	27	0	0	38	0	20	0	0	18	38
Crewe Towns Fund - Valley Brook Green Corridor	3,339	327	264	2,748	0	0	3,012	3,012	0	0	0	0	3,012
Crewe Towns Fund - Cumberland Arena	3,173	128	276	2,768	0	0	3,045	3,045	0	0	0	0	3,045
Crewe Towns Fund - Pocket Parks	1,481	652	302	527	0	0	829	829	0	0	0	0	829
Middlewich Leisure Centre	60	51	0	9	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	9	9
Libraries - Next Generation - Self Service	374	336	0	38	0	0	38	0	0	0	0	38	38
Bollington Leisure	51	0	51	0	0	0	51	51	0	0	0	0	51
Planning & Regulatory Services													
Regulatory Systems & Environmental Health ICT System	313	279	1	34	0	0	34	0	0	0	0	34	34
Total Committed Schemes	55,492	20,967	4,262	13,929	1,034	15,301	34,525	7,475	1,193	743	0	25,114	34,525

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Actuals 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
New Schemes													
Environment Services													
Closed Cemeteries	152	0	0	152	0	0	152	0	0	0	0	152	152
LTA - Tennis Facility Improvements	124	0	39	85	0	0	124	99	0	0	0	25	124
Review of Household Waste Recycling Centres	1,000	0	0	1,000	0	0	1,000	0	0	0	0	1,000	1,000
Strategic Leisure Review	3,400	0	1,329	1,421	650	0	3,400	0	0	0	0	3,400	3,400
Weekly Food Waste Collections	2,712	0	192	2,019	500	0	2,712	2,712	0	0	0	0	2,712
Macclesfield Crematorium - hearth replacement	72	0	72	0	0	0	72	0	0	72	0	0	72
Green Spaces Wilmslow - Mersey Forest	21	0	21	0	0	0	21	21	0	0	0	0	21
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total New Schemes	7,481	0	1,653	4,677	1,150	0	7,481	2,832	0	72	0	4,577	7,481
Total Environment and Communities Schemes	62,973	20,967	5,915	18,606	2,184	15,301	42,006	10,307	1,193	815	0	29,690	42,006

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Highways													
A532 Safer Road Fund Scheme	1,466	677	719	70	0	0	789	447	0	0	0	342	789
A536 Safer Road Fund Scheme	2,404	1,925	428	51	0	0	479	385	0	0	0	94	479
A537 Safer Road Fund Scheme	2,490	2,155	191	144	0	0	335	335	0	0	0	0	335
Air Quality Action Plan	523	421	101	2	0	0	102	87	0	0	0	15	102
Alderley Edge Bypass Scheme Implementation	60,411	60,359	1	51	0	0	52	0	0	0	0	52	52
Bridge Maintenance Minor Wks	12,463	10,037	1,635	792	0	0	2,427	1,406	602	0	0	418	2,427
Client Contract and Asset Mgmt	693	485	62	146	0	0	208	62	0	0	0	146	208
Footpath Maintenance - Slurry Sealing & Reconstruction Works	1,323	514	809	0	0	0	809	809	0	0	0	0	809
Highway Maintenance Minor Wks	69,622	53,616	15,936	70	0	0	16,006	9,994	0	0	0	6,011	16,006
Highway Pothole/Challenge Fund	11,669	8,098	3,399	172	0	0	3,571	3,316	0	0	0	255	3,571
Jack Mills Way Part 1 Claims	307	299	8	0	0	0	8	0	8	0	0	0	8
Local Highway Measures	7,255	6,873	232	151	0	0	382	382	0	0	0	0	382
Ward Members Local Highway Measures	872	0	319	553	0	0	872	496	0	0	0	376	872
Programme Management	1,547	1,229	317	2	0	0	318	318	0	0	0	0	318
Road Safety Schemes Minor Wks	6,423	5,944	316	163	0	0	478	350	0	0	0	128	478
Traffic Signal Maintenance	1,095	516	278	300	0	0	578	577	0	0	0	1	578
Traffic Signs and Bollards - LED Replacement	1,259	1,011	248	0	0	0	248	0	0	0	0	248	248
Winter Service Facility	957	674	97	97	89	0	283	0	0	0	0	283	283
Infrastructure													
Future High Street Funding - Adaptive Signals	509	455	0	54	0	0	54	0	54	0	0	0	54
Future High Street Funding - Flag Lane Link	1,481	1,249	232	0	0	0	232	232	0	0	0	0	232
Future High Street Funding - Southern Gateway	5,303	1,318	3,783	202	0	0	3,985	3,985	0	0	0	0	3,985
Highways & Infrastructure S106 Funded Schemes	5,590	816	529	2,519	489	1,238	4,774	378	4,391	0	0	5	4,774
Transport & Infrastructure Development Studies	350	10	33	307	0	0	340	340	0	0	0	0	340
Middlewich Eastern Bypass	96,600	26,237	1,441	21,730	22,876	24,316	70,363	46,779	14,611	0	0	8,973	70,363
Mill Street Corridor - Station Link Project	847	92	171	584	0	0	755	171	284	0	0	300	755
North-West Crewe Package	51,366	43,108	5,947	1,411	300	600	8,258	-1,092	3,368	0	0	5,982	8,258
Old Mill Road / The Hill Junction	1,325	187	1	1,136	0	0	1,137	0	1,137	0	0	0	1,137
Poynton Relief Road	54,848	46,283	1,010	2,709	1,146	3,700	8,565	2,236	4,319	0	1,000	1,010	8,565
Sydney Road Bridge	10,501	10,111	1	14	375	0	390	0	390	0	0	0	390

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Strategic Transport and Parking													
A538 Waters Roundabout Pedestrian and Cyclist Crossing	140	87	53	0	0	0	53	53	0	0	0	0	53
Active Travel Fund	3,400	729	97	2,574	0	0	2,671	2,671	0	0	0	0	2,671
Active Travel (Cycling / Walking Route) Investment	2,920	2,765	89	66	0	0	155	90	0	0	0	65	155
Available Walking Routes	151	0	0	151	0	0	151	151	0	0	0	0	151
Bollin Valley / Greater Bollin Trail	114	89	25	0	0	0	25	25	0	0	0	0	25
LEVI Capital Fund 23/24	2,172	0	0	543	543	1,086	2,172	2,172	0	0	0	0	2,172
On-street Residential Charging	551	258	131	162	0	0	293	251	0	0	0	42	293
Park Lane – Ayreshire Way, Congleton Walking and Cycling	482	14	419	49	0	0	468	468	0	0	0	0	468
Route 55 Middlewood Way on Black Lane	770	694	76	0	0	0	76	76	0	0	0	0	76
Sustainable Travel Access Prog	2,245	2,038	21	186	0	0	208	208	0	0	0	0	208
Sustainable Modes of Travel to Schools Strategy (SMOTSS)	1,117	756	126	234	0	0	361	361	0	0	0	0	361
Public Transport Infrastructure	1,615	1,134	452	29	0	0	481	481	0	0	0	0	481
Local Access - Crewe Transport Access Studies	400	88	0	312	0	0	312	312	0	0	0	0	312
Local Access - Macclesfield Transport Access Studies	300	61	0	239	0	0	239	239	0	0	0	0	239
Middlewich Rail Study	20	0	0	20	0	0	20	20	0	0	0	0	20
LTP Development & Monitoring Studies	900	430	30	220	221	0	471	471	0	0	0	0	471
Digital Car Parking Solutions	140	93	3	44	0	0	47	16	0	0	0	31	47
Pay and Display Parking Meters	620	607	0	13	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	13	13
Car Parking Improvements (including residents parking)	322	266	0	56	0	0	56	0	0	0	0	56	56
Total Committed Schemes	647,414	415,274	40,647	44,009	27,653	119,831	232,140	158,389	47,902	0	1,000	24,849	232,140
New Schemes													
Highways													
Managing and Maintaining Highways	4,712	0	0	4,712	0	0	4,712	0	0	0	0	4,712	4,712
Pothole Funding	17,397	0	0	5,799	5,799	5,799	17,397	17,397	0	0	0	0	17,397
Integrated Block - LTP	6,009	0	0	2,003	2,003	2,003	6,009	6,009	0	0	0	0	6,009
Maintenance Block - LTP	19,476	0	0	7,878	5,799	5,799	19,476	17,397	0	0	0	2,079	19,476
Incentive Fund - LTP	4,350	0	0	1,450	1,450	1,450	4,350	4,350	0	0	0	0	4,350
Strategic Transport and Parking													
BSIP+ Programme Delivery	539	89	0	450	0	0	450	450	0	0	0	0	450
Car Parking Review	895	0	570	325	0	0	895	0	0	328	325	242	895
New Grant Allocated for 2025-26													
Local Transport Grant	7,754	0	0	7,754	0	0	7,754	7,754	0	0	0	0	7,754
Total New Schemes	61,132	89	570	30,371	15,051	15,051	61,043	53,357	0	328	325	7,033	61,043
Total Highways & Transport	708,546	415,363	41,218	74,379	42,704	134,882	293,182	211,746	47,902	328	1,325	31,882	293,182

Highways and Transport Committee**19 June 2025****Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 – Part III, Section 53.****Application No CN-7-24: Application to delete Public Footpath 19 in the Parish of Audlem**

Report of: Philip Cresswell, Executive Director of Place**Report Reference No: HTC/46/24-25****Ward Affected: Audlem****Decision****Purpose of Report**

- 1 The report outlines the investigation of an application to amend the Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way by deleting Public Footpath 19 Audlem and shown on Plan WCA/40 between points 1 and 6 (“The Plan”). This includes a discussion of the consultations carried out in respect of the claim, the historical evidence, witness evidence and the legal tests for a Definitive Map Modification Order to be made. The report makes a recommendation based on this information for quasi-judicial decision by members as to whether an order should be made to delete a footpath.
- 2 The work of the Public Rights of Way team contributes to the Corporate Plan vision of Enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East, with the commitments of Unlocking prosperity for all and Improving health and wellbeing, and the policies and objectives of the Council’s statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Executive Summary

- 3 The report considers the evidence submitted and researched in the application to amend the Definitive Map and Statement by deleting Public Footpath 19 in the parish of Audlem. This includes a discussion of the consultations carried out in respect of the claim, the historical evidence, witness evidence and the legal tests for a Definitive Map Modification Order to be made. The report makes a recommendation based on that information, for quasi-judicial decision by Members as to whether an Order should be made to delete a public footpath.
- 4 The evidence consists of the application from the landowner, supporting statements from two neighbours and documentary evidence in the form of letters, maps and photos sent to the Council.
- 5 Various historical documents have been viewed including maps such as County Maps and Ordnance Survey maps, Tithe Map and Finance Act plans and valuation book.
- 6 Section 53(2)(b) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 requires that the Council shall keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review and make such modifications to the map and statement as appear requisite. One such event, section 53(3)(c)(iii) is where the discovery by the Authority of evidence shows that there is no public right of way over land shown in the map and statement as a highway of any description. Section 56 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 establishes that the Definitive Map and Statement are conclusive evidence as to the particulars contained therein. The report concludes whether on the balance of probabilities the Public Footpath was registered on the Definitive Map and Statement in error.
- 7 The evidence that has been submitted with this application and that considered during the subsequent consultation and investigation is considered insufficient in showing that the details contained in the Definitive Map and Statement should be modified.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways & Transport Committee is recommended to:

1. Decide that a Modification Order **not** be made under Section 53(3)(c)(iii) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to modify the Definitive Map and Statement to delete Footpath 19 as shown on Plan No. WCA/40 at Appendix 1.
2. The application be refused on the grounds that there is insufficient evidence to overturn the legal presumption that the Definitive Map and Statement are correct.

3. Note that in the event of objections being received, Cheshire East Borough Council be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or Public Inquiry.

Background

- 8 The application was submitted by Mr Lawrence, owner and occupier of Meadows Farm, Audlem on the 20th October 2005. The application consisted of an application form (Form D), maps showing the area in contention; Interim Memorandum Divisional Engineer East Map dated 27th April 1984, Public Rights of Way Unit map dated October 1996, map supplied by the Public Rights of Way Officer in August 2000, evidence of use forms (Form F) signed by witnesses and maps or sketch plans from each witness. The application was submitted by Mr Lawrence; however, due to his unavailability further supporting evidence was provided by the family.

Description of the application route

- 9 Commencing from Point 1 on the Plan at the junction with Footpath 31 the path leads into the field through a metal kissing gate, with a dilapidated old timber field gate to the side. There is an official signpost from the roadside with additional way marker discs on it. There are a number of home-made signs on the kissing gate requesting that walkers keep dogs on leads to avoid disturbing ground nesting birds and requesting that people “pick up” after their dog. At Point 2 the path continues past a small “hollow” and the ground becomes a little wet underfoot. The path proceeds in a south easterly direction towards the centre of the field, is well trodden and easy to follow. At Point 3 just off the alignment of the Footpath there is a clear “hollow” in the ground, which is difficult to see on the photograph in appendix 2 but quite clear on site. At Point 4 it passes through a gap in the hedge line; there is a slight depression in the ground indicative of a stream or open drain, and it is clear the ground can be wet here at times. There are signs of an old fence and timber structure in the undergrowth with an official Cheshire East Council way marker on it. Heading towards Point 5 the path follows the hedge line in a south easterly direction along a well-trodden route, which is easily followed. It continues along the hedge line until it reaches a metal kissing gate at Point 6 which is the junction with Bridleway 31. Alongside the kissing gate is an older timber field-gate that has fallen into disrepair.

Photographs

- 10 Photographs of the Footpath can be seen at Appendix 2

Main Issues

- 11 Section 53(2)(b) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 requires that the Council shall keep the Definitive Map and statement under continuous review and make such modifications to the Map and Statement as appear requisite in consequence of the occurrence of certain events:-
- 12 One such event, section 53(3)(c)(iii) is where:

“(c) the discovery by the authority of evidence which (when considered with all other relevant evidence available to them) shows:-

(iii) that there is no public right of way over land shown in the map and statement as a highway of any description, or any other particulars contained in the map and statement require modification.
- 13 There has to be a discovery of evidence and this evidence can consist of documentary/historical evidence or witness evidence or a mixture of both. All the evidence must be evaluated and weighed, and a conclusion reached whether, the evidence outweighs the conclusivity of the Definitive Map and Statement. Any other issues, such as safety, security, suitability, desirability or the effects on property or the environment, are not relevant to the decision.
- 14 The Planning Inspectorate’s Consistency Guidelines (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 - Definitive Map Orders) indicates that a proof of a negative is seldom easy, and the more time that elapses, the more difficult will be the task of adducing the positive evidence that is necessary to establish that a right of way that has been marked on a Definitive Map has been marked there by mistake.”
- 15 The case of *Trevelyan v Secretary of State For Environment, Transport & Regions* [2001] EWCA Civ 266 is of particular relevance in applications to delete Public Rights of Way. Lord Phillips stated at paragraph 38 that:

“Where the Secretary of State or an inspector appointed by him has to consider whether a right of way that is marked on a Definitive Map in fact exists, he must start with an initial presumption that it does. If there were no evidence which made it reasonably arguable that such a right of way existed, it should not have been marked on the map. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it should be assumed that the proper procedures were followed and thus that such evidence existed. At the end of the day, when all the evidence has been considered, the standard of proof required to justify a finding that no right of way exists is no more than the balance of probabilities. But evidence of some substance must be put in the balance, if it is to outweigh the initial presumption that the right of way exists. Proof of a negative is seldom easy, and the more time that elapses, the more difficult will be the task of adducing the positive

evidence that is necessary to establish that a right of way that has been marked on a Definitive Map has been marked there by mistake.”

The investigation

- 16 An investigation of the available evidence has been undertaken. The documentary evidence that has been examined is referred to below and a list of all the evidence taken into consideration can be found in Appendix 3.

County Maps 18th/19th Century

- 17 These are small scale maps made by commercial map-makers, some of which are known to have been produced from original surveys and others are believed to be copies of earlier maps. All were essentially topographic maps portraying what the surveyors saw on the ground. They included features of interest, including roads and tracks. It is doubtful whether mapmakers checked the status of routes or had the same sense of status of routes that exist today. There are known errors on many map-makers' work and private estate roads and cul-de-sac paths are sometimes depicted as 'cross-roads'. The maps do not provide conclusive evidence of public status, although they may provide supporting evidence of the existence of a route.
- 18 The Footpath which is subject to the application is not shown on the P.P. Burdett 1777 map nor the Swire and Hutching's map of 1829 nor A Bryant's Map of 1831.

Tithe Map

- 19 Tithe Awards were prepared under the Tithe Commutation Act 1836, which commuted the payment of a tax (tithe) in kind, to a monetary payment. The purpose of the Award was to record productive land on which a tax could be levied. The Tithe Map and Award were independently produced by parishes and the quality of the maps is variable. The 1836 Act relieved the Tithe Commissioners of the need to certify all maps.
- 20 It was not the purpose of the Awards to record public highways. Although depiction of both private occupation and public roads may provide good supporting evidence of the existence of a route, especially since they were implemented as part of a statutory process. Colouring of a track may or may not be significant in determining status. In the absence of a key, explanation or other corroborative evidence the colouring cannot be deemed to be conclusive of anything.
- 21 The Tithe Commutation Act 1836 (as amended by the Tithe Act Amendment Act, 1837) established two classes of tithe map. First class

maps had the Commissioners' seal attached, showing them to be reliable as a true record of matters relating to the purposes for which the map was designed. However, second class maps, which failed in some, often minor, way to meet the stringent test for first class status, are not necessarily inferior from a cartographic point of view. Both first and second class maps have been accepted by the courts as evidence.

- 22 The Tithe map for the Township of Audlem produced c.1842 is a second class map. The Footpath is not shown on the map. The Footpath as registered on the Definitive Map appears to run through plots number 437 (pasture), 434 (arable), 418 (pasture), 422 (meadow) and possibly 435 (mill fields). All the plots apart from plot 435 were all registered to the same owner.

Ordnance Survey Records (OS)

- 23 OS mapping was originally for military purposes to record all roads and tracks that could be used in times of war; this included both public and private routes. These maps are good evidence of the physical existence of routes, but not necessarily of status. Since 1889 the Ordnance Survey has included a disclaimer on all of its maps to the effect that the depiction of a road is not evidence of the existence of a right of way. It is argued that this disclaimer was solely to avoid potential litigation. Recent research into the instructions given to the field surveyors and the development of the OS shows they appear to have tried to depict all routes, paths and ways that were physical features and if observed to be used by the public. However, there is no documentation to show the OS went through a statutory process of checking with the local authorities to establish the status of a way or path. Research by Yolande Hodson indicates there was tension in the modern era within the OS to agree what would be shown on the maps, who were their audience and how to depict the condition and status and at the published scales, what should be omitted. The maps are good evidence of the existence of a way or path and can support any other evidence claiming public rights of way.

- 24 O.S. 1st Edition County Series 6" to 1 mile 1882

A double pecked line is shown following more or less along public Footpath 19 as recorded on the Definitive Map. Some field boundaries have changed since this map was produced. On the map, comparative with the path between Point 1 and point 2 on The Plan there is a small pond just to the south the path; the path is shown skirting its edge.

- 25 O.S 2nd Edition 25" to 1 mile 1898

There are no physical indications of Footpath 19 on this map. A double pecked line commences at the northern end near where the Footpath 19

commences, however it runs over to the nearby farm (currently known as "Meadows Farm").

- 26 O.S. 2nd Edition County Series 6" to 1 mile 1899

There are no physical indications of Footpath 19 on this map. A double pecked line commences at the northern end near where the Footpath 19 commences, however it heads over to the nearby farm ("Meadows Farm").

- 27 O.S. 2nd Edition 6" to 1 mile 1903

There are no physical indications of Footpath 19 on this map. A double pecked line commences at the northern end near where the Footpath 19 commences, however it heads over to the nearby farm ("Meadows Farm")

- 28 OS 2nd Edition County Series 6" to 1 mile 1912

There are no physical indications of Footpath 19 on this map. A double pecked line commences at the northern end near where the Footpath 19 commences, however it heads over to the nearby farm ("Meadows Farm"). The letters FP are shown by the double pecked lines.

- 29 OS 2 ½" to 1 mile 1963

There are no physical indications of Footpath 19 on this map.

Finance Act 1910

- 30 The Finance Act of 1910 involved a national survey of land by the Inland Revenue so that an incremental value duty could be levied when ownership was transferred. Land was valued for each owner/occupier and this land was given a hereditament number. It is thought that exclusion of highways on the maps came under S35(1) of the Act not to charge on land or an interest in land held by a rating authority.

- 31 Landowners could claim tax relief where a highway crossed their land. Although the existence of a public right of way may be admitted it is not usually described or a route shown on the plan. This Act was repealed in 1920.

- 32 Two sets of plans were produced: the working plans for the original valuation and the record plans once the valuation was complete. Two sets of books were produced to accompany the maps; the field books, which record what the surveyor found at each property and the so-called 'Domesday Book', which was the complete register of properties and valuations.

- 33 Hereditament number 205 includes all fields through which the entire length of public Footpath 19 runs, passing through OS field numbers 464, 478 and 481.
- 34 The valuation book lists "1 Footpath" under fixed charges, easements, common rights and restrictions. It identifies a deduction of £33.00 for public rights way or user. There is no consistent approach to value of deduction in relation to the length of path however it is highly likely that the public right of way being referred to is Footpath 19 as no other public right of way exists or is otherwise recorded in the hereditament number for which Meadows Farm is located. No other public rights of way recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement exist within hereditament 205.

Pre Definitive Map records

- 35 The Public Rights of Way team hold records that pre-existed the Definitive Map process.
- 36 The "Nantwich Footpath map" (circa 1930) identifies Footpaths which existed in the Rural District of Nantwich and are categorised as: Footpaths that simply exist and which no repair appear to have been carried out shown coloured red. Footpaths previously repaired by the Rural District Council shown coloured blue. Footpaths previously repaired by the Parish Councils shown coloured green. Each Footpath is numbered to correspond with schedule on file: G.M. 180. Footpath 19 is shown coloured red and numbered as path number 308 indicating that it was a Footpath that existed but no repairs had been undertaken.

Definitive map process – National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

- 37 The Definitive Map and statement is based on surveys and plans produced in the early 1950's by each parish in Cheshire, of all the ways they considered to be public at that time. The surveys were used as the basis for the draft Definitive Map.

Audlem Parish Survey Schedule and Map (1951)

- 38 On page 1 of the parish schedule the Footpath is numbered as 19 and described as commencing at Monks Lane opposite what appears to say Mill Lane Farm. There are hand drawn arrows on the page that indicate that the commencement point and termination point of the path should be read the other way around from how it is written on the page.
- 39 The length shows 100yds struck out and replaced by 555yds. The lettering (stile)S.1, F.2, (Field gate) FG.3 (Field Gate) and Gap 4 are included in the general description; these correspond to those included

in the draft Definitive Map. The general description identifies that S.1 is now part of the hedge/fencing and “no” use as a stile. The path is described as across meadowland and not defined.

- 40 On page 2, under details of any old maps, diversion orders, dedication agreements, parish minutes etc there is a faint text stating “see file 5/680”, which is also the reference number on the Audlem Parish Survey extract. There is other text which is difficult to decipher but could be read as “G.M 1150 GEN. Closed under Defence Regs. Order” followed by a word that is unclear followed by the year 1946. Under the section relating to whether any part of the path has been disputed this is left blank. The names of those carrying out the survey have been included and is dated Sept 1951.
- 41 The parish survey makes reference to the path being closed under the “Defence Regs”. It is known that some public rights of way throughout the country would have been closed during the War periods, for various reasons including food production/agricultural purposes and that these were on a temporary basis, revoked at the end of the war. It is understood that County executive committees would have had a role in these but that they were largely undocumented.
- 42 For the closures to take permanent effect it would have required further orders as indicated by the Planning Inspectorate’s Consistency Guidelines (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 - Definitive Map Orders), which confirms that any temporary closures of rights of way made under emergency powers during the First or Second World Wars would have ceased to have effect on 28 June 1920 or 31 December 1958 as appropriate. There is no evidence that any subsequent order was made in this instance.
- 43 The position regarding the Defence Regulations is outlined in a letter from Cheshire East to the applicant on the 26th June 1995.
- 44 On the parish survey map Footpath 19 is shown broadly following the alignment on the Definitive Map. It is a red broken line commencing from the unclassified road (UC/5/68) and leading in a generally south easterly direction. File 5/680 is written on the map pointing to Footpath 19. Just due west of Meadows Farm an unbroken red line has been drawn running roughly east-west crossing Footpath 19 and ending at Meadows Farm. Footpath 19 continues south to meet Mill Lane.

Draft Definitive Map (Published 6th February 1956)

- 45 Footpath 19 is shown commencing at a stile (S.1) to the west of Meadows Farm, at the unclassified road (UC/5/68). It is shown passing through a field boundary, referenced as F.2 on the map. It heads south for a short

distance through what appears to be an open field before reaching a field gate (FG.3) at Mill Lane. The path is shown continuing along and what will eventually be registered as path number 30 (Mill Lane) before arriving at a point referenced as Gap.4 on a bend in the unclassified road (UC/5/68). Paths number 30 and 31 are not shown on the map.

Provisional Definitive Map (Published 2nd December 1969)

- 46 Footpath 19 is shown commencing to the west of Meadows Farm, at the junction with Footpath 31 at the unclassified road (UC/5/68). It heads through what appears to be an open field before heading in a more southerly direction to meet Bridleway 30 at Mill Lane.

Definitive Map (Published 21st December 1973)

- 47 Footpath 19 is shown commencing to the west of Meadows Farm, at the junction with Footpath 31 at the unclassified road (UC/5/68). It heads through what appears to be an open field before heading in a more southerly direction to meet Bridleway 30 at Mill Lane.

Aerial Images

- 48 A number of aerial images were available for the location spanning the period from the 1940's through to 2024

- 49 Black and white image 1940's

The fields through which the Footpath runs are largely over exposed and its impossible to see if there are any walked routes shown on the ground along Footpath 19. There is a circular shadow in the field just due east of where it meets the unclassified road (UC/5/68); it is unclear what this is but it looks most like a mark or stain on the photo.

- 50 Black and white image (colour) 1970's

The field layout is very similar to the 1940's map with the exception of the removal of some of the smaller enclosures. The picture quality is greater than for the 1940's image. It is not possible make out any walked alignment along the route of Footpath 19.

- 51 Aerial image (colour) 1980's

The field layout has changed very little. There is a large grey/brown "scar" in the field just beneath where Footpath 19 runs due west of Meadows Farm; it is unclear what this but is just south of the alignment of the Footpath. It is not possible make out any walked alignment along the route of Footpath 19.

52 Aerial image (colour) 2024

The field layout is largely unchanged. There is no indication of a walked line in the field immediately off Bridleway 30 (Mill Lane) however where it leads north westerly in the adjoining field there is a very distinct line along route of Footpath 19.

Applicants case

53 There is one owner who is also the applicant and they included evidence from two other individuals in their application to corroborate that the path had not been used historically. The application was submitted by Mr Lawrence; however due to his unavailability, further supporting evidence was provided by the family. A signed statement identifies a number of issues that they believe supports their case that Footpath 19 has been incorrectly registered.

54 The Footpath was not identified in the deeds to the property when it was purchased in 1953 and as such that they did not know that a public right way existed until 1995, when they were contacted by Cheshire East Council. They cite that as an operational dairy farm they would have undoubtedly seen people using the Footpath and that any gates either end of the path would have been for agricultural purposes rather than for public access.

55 They are of the belief that there is no historical evidence which would corroborate the need for a Public Footpath at this location and reference how sparsely populated Little Heath would have been. They are of the view that the logical way to have travelled to the nearby mill would have been via Mill Lane (Bridleway 30) and that any rights of access would have been a private right for the miller who previously lived at Meadows Farm. They refer to the previous entrance to Meadows Farm coinciding with where Footpath 19 leave Monks Lane, prior to the new entrance being installed at a later date.

56 They submit a number of aerial images including one from 1932 which indicates a hedge running between Monks Lane and the "front field", with a second parallel internal field hedge, which they argue would make pedestrian access impassable. They are keen to stress that the post 2005 aerial images which show a well-trodden route along the alignment of Footpath 19 are in contrast to the older aerial images dated 1932, 1971-73, 1983 and 1999-2003 which do not show any such indication of use.

57 Seven maps were also submitted as part of the application, titled maps A, B, C, D, E and enclosures 211, 212 and 213; map A appears to replicate the map in enclosure 211.

- 58 Map A is also included as part of enclosure 211, which accompanies a memorandum to the Divisional Engineer on the 27th April 1984 with a request to deliver two stiles for installation on a nearby path. Footpath 19 is not shown on this map, however the purpose of the map is to depict the location of the Footpath where the stiles are required rather than to show any other public rights of way.
- 59 Map B relates to Road Used as Public Path (RUPP) 30 Audlem dated October 1996. Footpath 19 is not shown on this map, however the purpose of the map is to depict the location of RUPP 30 and land owned alongside the RUPP, rather than to show any other public rights of way.
- 60 Map C is a copy the OS map, 6" to 1-mile 1912 Edition Cheshire Sheet LXVI N.W. There are no physical indications of Footpath 19 on this map. A double pecked line commences at the northern end near where the Footpath 19 commences, however it heads over to the nearby farm (what is modern day Meadows Farm). The letters FP are shown by the double pecked lines. OS maps are a good indication of the physical existence of a route on the ground however they were not created to record public rights of way and the inclusion or otherwise of a route is not conclusive evidence of the existence or lack of existence of public rights of way.
- 61 Map D is an extract of an OS map, which is not titled, but is likely to be the 2nd Edition 25" to 1 mile Cheshire LXVI.2 map 1898. The map is enlarged to show Meadows Farm and there are no physical indications of Footpath 19 on this map. A double pecked line commences at the northern end near where the Footpath 19 commences, however it heads over to Meadows Farm. OS maps are a good indication of the physical existence of a route on the ground however they were not created to record public rights of way and the inclusion or otherwise of a route is not conclusive evidence of the existence or lack of existence of public rights of way.
- 62 Map E appears to be a reproduction of the 1" to 1 mile OS map which, is not titled; however in the submission statement as part of the application it is referenced as Combermere Estates (Sales particulars 1917) showing Footpath 17 and 18 but not Footpath 19. The scale means it is difficult to decipher the detail, but it does not appear to show any route in the vicinity of Footpath 19. As with Map C and D above, OS maps are a good indication of the physical existence of a route on the ground however they were not created to record public rights of way and the inclusion or otherwise of a route is not conclusive evidence of the existence or lack of existence of public rights of way.
- 63 Enclosure 212 is a map relating to the reclassification of Road Used as Public Path (RUPP) 30 under the Definitive Map and Statement for the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich (Reclassification of Roads Used as

Public Paths) Order 1996. Footpath 19 is not shown on this map; however the purpose of the map is to depict the location of RUPP 30, which is subject to the order being made rather than to show any other public rights of way.

- 64 Enclosure 213 is a map which was shared by Cheshire East Council with the applicant is the appears to be an extract of a working copy of the Definitive Map. It appears to depict Footpath 19 in the location where it is currently registered on the Definitive Map.

Witnesses evidence

- 65 There were two witness statements included in the application; one of whom is now deceased and the other unavailable to provide further detail.
- 66 One witness who lives near where Footpath 19 leaves Monks Lane indicated that in 18 years of living at the property, he had not seen anyone using the Footpath. The other witness indicated that a section of hedge was removed, and a gate installed near where Footpath 19 leaves Monks Lane. There is no indication of how long this witness knew the path or the area.

Consultation and Engagement

- 67 Consultation documentation was sent on 7th October 2024 to interested parties including the owners/occupier, Audlem Ward Member, the Audlem Parish Council and local user groups. Audlem Parish Council were unable to issue a formal response.
- 68 The Peak & Northern Footpath Society confirmed that they had no evidence with regards to the footpath. South Cheshire Ramblers responded indicating that the path looked well used and does not appear to affect the privacy of the farmhouse, which is shielded by trees and a hedge. The Open Spaces Society provided no evidence but were confident that the application was without merit and that publicly available data contradicts the Applicant's claims.
- 69 User evidence forms indicating use of the public Footpath was submitted by five individuals, with earliest use dating back to 1984. This use is not relevant in concluding this case as it post-dates the registration of the Footpath on the Definitive Map.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 70 Under Section 53 of the 1981 Act, the Council has a duty as the Surveying Authority to keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review. Section 53 (c) allows for an authority to act on the “discovery of evidence” that suggests that the Definitive Map and Statement needs to

be amended. The authority must investigate and determine that evidence and decide on the outcome whether to make a DMMO or not.

- 71 The Finance Act map and valuation books are of particular relevance in this instance in that they identify a deduction for a public right of way, thus reinforcing the existence of a public right of way. There is no consistent approach to value of deduction in relation to the length of path however it is highly likely that the public right of way being referred to is Footpath 19 as no other public right of way exists or is otherwise recorded in the hereditament number for which meadows Farm is located.
- 72 The route of Footpath 19 is depicted in its entirety on the OS map 1st Edition County Series 6" to 1 mile 1882, which is an indication that there was a physical route visible on the ground at the time of survey. The later OS maps do not depict Footpath 19 along its current alignment, rather showing a route running towards Meadows Farm. OS maps were originally prepared for defence purposes and with the intention of providing a definitive or conclusive depiction of public rights of way. OS maps are a good indication of the physical existence of a route on the ground however they are not conclusive evidence of the existence or location of public rights of way. Similarly, the lack of a route depicted on the OS maps or that a route is shown in a different location is not conclusive of there being an error in the Definitive Map and Statement
- 73 The Nantwich Footpath Map c1930 includes Footpath 19 along its alignment as shown in the Definitive Map and Statement. This is considered good supporting evidence of the existence and location of Footpath 19 as it was a document produced and used by the Cheshire County Council as a record of the existence of public Footpaths and their maintenance.
- 74 With regards to the landowners statement, there is no doubt that it is an honestly held belief that the path has been registered in error, however the evidence submitted holds insufficient weight to prove that public Footpath 19 should be deleted. There are clearly some practical issues related to management of the farm that caused difficulty when it was fully operational; however, these issues of convenience and safety cannot be considered as part of the evidence to delete the path.
- 75 The applicant submitted seven maps with their application as supporting evidence; maps A, B, C, D, E and enclosures 212 and 213. Maps C, D and E are various editions and scales of OS maps and as identified above, the lack of a route depicted on these maps or that a route is shown in a different location is not conclusive of there being an error in the Definitive Map and Statement.

- 76 It is considered that the evidence that has been submitted with the application and during the subsequent consultation is insufficient in showing that the details Definitive Map and Statement needs modifying by deleting Public Footpath 19.
- 77 The work of the Public Rights of Way team contributes to the Green aim of the Corporate Plan, the “thriving and sustainable place” priority, and the policies and objectives of the Council’s statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Other Options Considered

- 78 If the authority was to do nothing it would not comply with Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which requires the Council to keep the Definitive Map and statement under continuous review and make such modifications to the Map and Statement as required.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 79 The legal implications in relation to highways law are set out in the Legal matters section of this report (paragraph 11-15).
- 80 The Human Rights Act is also of relevance. Whilst article 1 to the first protocol (peaceful enjoyment of property) and article 8 (right to respect for family, private life and home) are engaged, it is important to note that these rights are qualified, not absolute, which means that they can be interfered with in so far as such interference is in accordance with domestic law and is necessary in a democratic society for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. It is considered that any interference occasioned by the making of a Modification Order is both in accordance with domestic law (the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) and is in the public interest as it is necessary in a democratic society for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others, namely the public who wish to use the way. Should Members resolve that a Modification Order be made in accordance with highways legislation, this is merely the start of the legal process. Once a Modification Order is made, it must be publicised, and any person will have an opportunity to formally object to it. Should objections be received, the Modification Order would have to be referred to the Secretary of State who may hold a Public Inquiry before deciding upon whether or not to confirm the Modification Order.
- 81 Please note that the Council will not disclose the user evidence forms that form part of the background documentation at this stage in the process. The Council considers that the information provided within the user evidence documentation is exempt information under s1&2 Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

82 Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, there is no such statutory right prior to an Order having been made - persons affected are entitled to the information in the event that an Order is made following the Committee decision.

83 Once an Order is made it may be the subject of objections. If objections are not withdrawn, this removes the power of the Local Authority to confirm the Order itself and may lead to a hearing or Public Inquiry. It follows that the Committee decision may be confirmed or not confirmed. This process may involve additional legal support and resources.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

84 If objections to an Order lead to a subsequent hearing/inquiry, the Council would be responsible for any costs involved in the preparation and conducting of such. The maintenance of the Public Right of Way would continue to be the responsibility of the landowner and Council in line with legislation. The associated costs would be borne within existing Public Rights of Way revenue and capital budgets.

Policy

85 The work of the Public Rights of Way team contributes to the Vision of the Corporate Plan of a greener Cheshire East, with the aim of “a thriving and sustainable place”, and the policies and objectives of the Council’s statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Corporate Plan 2025-2029

Vision: Enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East

Commitments –

- Unlocking prosperity for all
- Improving health & wellbeing

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

86 An assessment in relation to the Equality Act 2010 has been carried out by the Public Rights of Way Network Management and Enforcement Officer for the area and it is considered that the proposed diversion would be no less convenient to use than the current one.

The legal tests under section 53 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 do not include an assessment of the effects under the Equality Act 2010.

Human Resources

- (a) There are no direct implications for Human Resources.

Risk Management

- (b) There are no direct implications for risk management.

Rural Communities

- (c) There are no direct implications for Rural Communities.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- (d) There are no direct implications for Children and Young People

Public Health

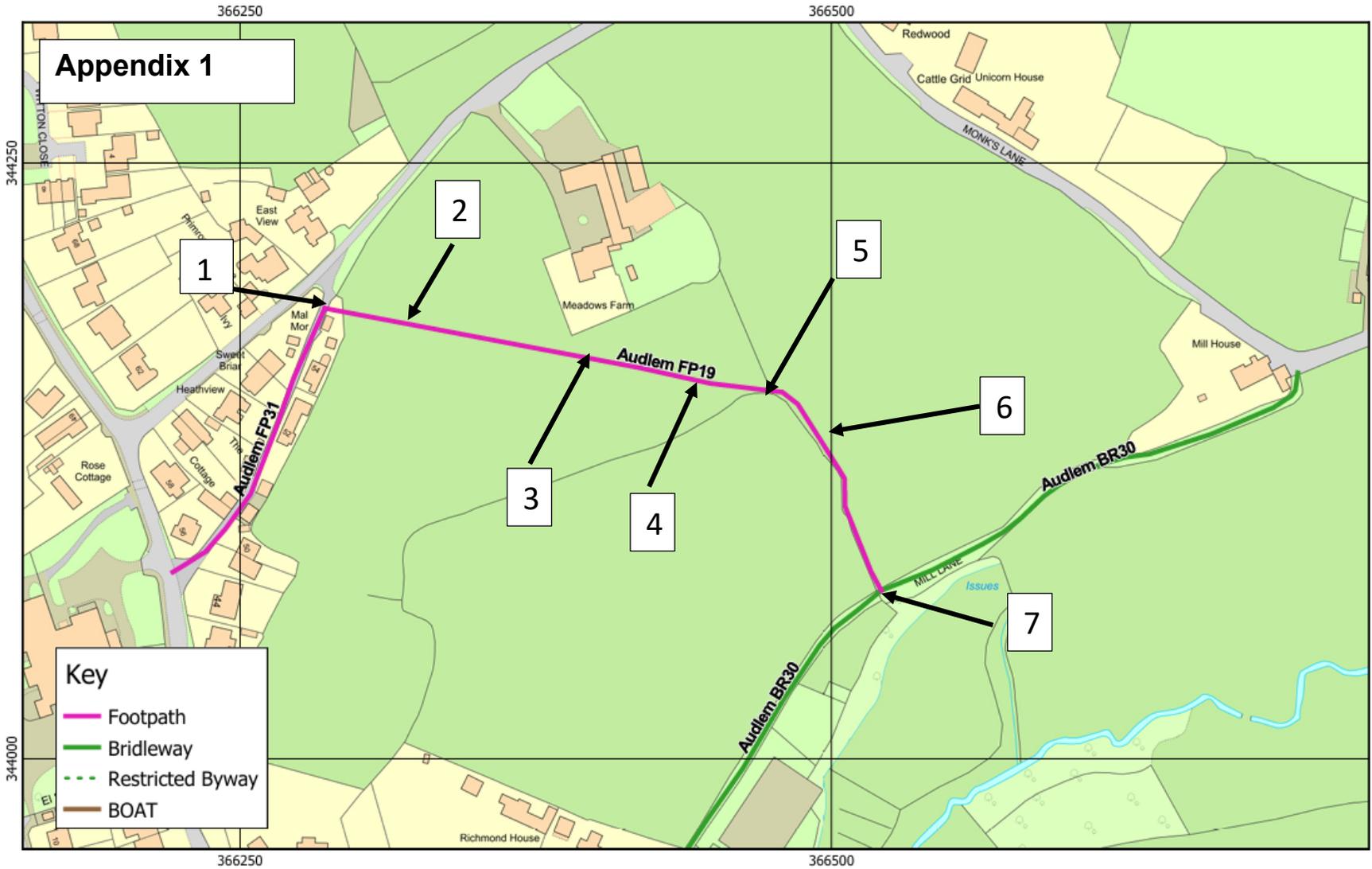
- (e) The recommendations are anticipated to offer a positive overall impact on the health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents.

Climate Change

- (f) The recommendations will help the Council to reduce its carbon footprint and achieve environmental sustainability by reducing energy consumption and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Adele Mayer adele.mayer@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 Report Plan Appendix 2 Images Appendix 3 Reference List
Background Papers:	The background papers and files relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.

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Appendix 1

Key

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- - - Restricted Byway
- BOAT

N
1:2000

WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981
DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDER APPLICATION RELATING TO
DELETION OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH 19 IN AUDLEM PARISH, CHESHIRE EAST

Plan No.
WCA/40

This is a working copy of the definitive map and should not be used for legal purposes



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Appendix 2

Point 1 looking south-east (11th October 2024)



Point 2 looking south-east (11th October 2024)



Point 3 looking north-west (11th October 2024)



Point 4 looking east (11th October 2024)



Point 5 (11th October 2024)



Point 6 looking south - (11th October 2024)



Point 7 gates from Bridleway number 30 known as Mill Lane looking north – (11th October 2024)



APPENDIX 3

List of Archive Documents –

Application No. WCA/40

To delete public footpath 19 in the Parish of Audlem

PROW = Public Rights of Way Unit

CRO = Cheshire Record Office

TNA = The National Archives, Kew

Primary Sources	Date	Site Shown/Mentioned	Reference Number/Source
County Maps			
Burdett PP	1794	Route not shown	View map: Stuart, James ; Burdett, Peter Perry, The county palatine of Chester: reduced from the large survey in four sheets - Counties of Scotland, 1580-1928 (nls.uk)
Swire & Hutchings	1830	Route not shown	View map: Swire, William. ; Hutchings, W. F., A map of the county palatine of Chester, divided into hundreds & parishes, from an accurate survey, ... - Counties of Scotland, 1580-1928 (nls.uk)
Bryant A	1831	Route not shown	View map: Bryant, Andrew, South-east sheet - Map of the county palatine of Chester from an actual survey made in the years 182... - Counties of Scotland, 1580-1928 (nls.uk)
Tithe Records			
Tithe Map	1842	Route not shown on the map. The path runs through Plots number 437 (pasture), 435 (arable), 434 (arable), 418 (pasture), and 422 (meadow)	Cheshire Tithe Maps Online (cheshireeast.gov.uk)
Ordnance Survey Maps			
O.S. 6" to 1 mile 1 st Edition	1882	A double pecked line is shown following more or less along public footpath 19 as recorded on the definitive map. Some field boundaries have changed since this map was produced	View map: Ordnance Survey, Cheshire LXVI (inset LXVIII) (includes: Adderley; Barlaston; Buerton; Norton in Hales; Stoke on Tren... - Ordnance Survey Six-inch England and Wales, 1842-1952 (nls.uk)
O.S "25" to 1 mile 2 nd edition	1897	There are no physical indications of footpath 19 on this map. A double pecked line commences at the northern end near where the footpath 19 commences, however it heads over to the nearby farm (what is modern day Meadows Farm)	View map: Ordnance Survey, Cheshire LXVI.2 (Audlem; Buerton) - Ordnance Survey 25 inch England and Wales, 1841-1952
O.S. 6" to 1 mile 2 nd Edition	1899	There are no physical indications of footpath 19 on this map. A double pecked line commences at the northern end near where the footpath 19	View map: Ordnance Survey, Cheshire LXVI.NW (includes: Audlem; Buerton; Dodcott Cum Wilkesley; Newhall.) - Ordnance Survey Six-inch England and Wales, 1842-1952 (nls.uk)

		commences, however it heads over to the nearby farm (what is modern day Meadows Farm)	
O.S. 6" to 1 mile 2 nd Edition	1903	There are no physical indications of footpath 19 on this map. A double pecked line commences at the northern end near where the footpath 19 commences, however it heads over to the nearby farm (what is modern day Meadows Farm)	View map: Ordnance Survey, Shropshire III.SW (includes: Audlem; Buerton.) - Ordnance Survey Six-inch England and Wales, 1842-1952 (nls.uk)
O.S. 6" to 1 mile 1912 2 nd Edition	1912	There are no physical indications of footpath 19 on this map. A double pecked line commences at the northern end near where the footpath 19 commences, however it heads over to the nearby farm (what is modern day Meadows Farm). The letters FP are shown by the double pecked lines.	View map: Ordnance Survey, Cheshire LXVI.NW (includes: Audlem; Buerton; Dodcott Cum Wilkesley; Newhall.) - Ordnance Survey Six-inch England and Wales, 1842-1952 (nls.uk)
O.S. 2 ½ " to 1 mile	1963	No route shown	View map: Ordnance Survey, SJ6644-SJ6744 - AA - Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale map - Ordnance Survey National Grid Maps, 1940s-1970s (nls.uk)
Bartholomew's half inch 1902 new series	1902	No route shown	View map: Bartholomew, John G., 1860-1920, sheet 12 - Cheshire - Bartholomew's 'Half Inch to the Mile Maps' of England and Wales, 1902-1906 (nls.uk)
Finance Act			
Record Plans	1910	Hereditament 205 includes all fields through which the the entire public footpath runs through OS field numbers 464, 478 and 481. No other public rights of way as shown on the definitive map exist within the hereditament.	TNA via PROW Unit
Valuation Book		Under fixed charges, easements, common rights and restrictions it lists "1 footpath" It identifies a deduction of £33.00 for public rights way or user	TNA via PROW Unit
Other Plans			

Local Authority Records			
Pre Definitive Map – Nantwich Footpath Map	Circa 1930	<p>This document identifies footpath which in exist in Nantwich and are categorised as:</p> <p>Footpaths that simply exist and which no repair appear to have been carried out shown coloured red.</p> <p>Footpaths previously repaired by the Rural District Council shown coloured blue.</p> <p>Footpaths previously repaired by the Parish Councils shown coloured green.</p> <p>Each footpath is numbered to correspond with schedule on file: G.M. 180.</p>	PROW Unit
Audlem Parish Survey Map	1950's	<p>Footpath No 19 is shown broadly following the alignment on the definitive map. It is a red broken line commencing from the unclassified road (UC/5/68) and leading in a generally south easterly direction. File 5/680 is written on the map pointing to Footpath 19. Just due west of Meadows Farm an unbroken red line has been drawn running roughly east-west crossing footpath No19 and ending at Meadows Farm. Footpath No19 continues south to meet Mill Lane.</p>	PROW Unit
Definitive Map	1950's	<p>Footpath No 19 is shown commencing at path no30 Mill Lane heading north for a short distance before heading in a more north easterly direction passing through a filed boundary and to the west of Meadows Farm, to meet footpath No31 at the unclassified road (UC/5/68).</p>	PROW Unit
Draft definitive map	1950's	<p>Footpath 19 is shown commencing at a stile (S.1) to the west of Meadows Farm, at the unclassified road (UC/5/68). It is shown passing through a field boundary, referenced as F.2 on the map. It heads south for a short</p>	PROW Unit

		distance through what appears to be an open field before reaching a field gate (FG.3) at Mill Lane. The path is shown continuing along and what will eventually be registered as path number 30 (Mill Lane) before arriving at a point referenced as Gap.4 on a bend in the UC/5/88. Paths number 30 and 31 are not shown on the map.	
Provisional definitive map	1950's	Footpath 19 is shown commencing to the west of Meadows Farm, at the junction with Footpath 31 at the unclassified road (UC/5/68). It heads through what appears to be an open field before heading in a more southerly direction to meet Bridleway 30 at Mill Lane	PROW Unit
Definitive survey	1950's	The statement describes the footpath as commencing from Unclassified County Road (UC/5/68) generally in an easterly direction to RP30.	PROW Unit
Parish Survey	1950's	<p>Page 1 – the footpath is numbered as 19 and described as commencing at Monks Lane opposite what appears to say Mill Lane Farm. There are arrows indicating that the commencement point and termination point should be read the other way around. The length shows 100yds struck out and replaced by 555yds. The lettering S.I, F.2, FG.3 and Gap 4 are included in the general description; these correspond to those included in the extract of the draft definitive map. The general description identifies that S.I is now part of the hedge/fencing and “no” use as a stile.</p> <p>The path is described as across meadowland and not defined.</p> <p>Page 2 - Under details of any old maps, diversion orders, dedication agreements, parish minutes etc there is a faint text stating see file 5/680, which is also the reference number on the Audlem Parish Survey extract. There is other text which is difficult to decipher but are along the lines of G.M 1150</p>	PROW Unit

		<p>GEN. Closed under Defence Regs. Order followed a word that us unclear, followed by 1946. Under the section relating to whether any part of the path has been disputed this is left blank.</p> <p>Names of those carrying out the survey have been included. It is dated Sept 1951.</p>	
Aerial Images			
Aerial image Black and white	1940's	The fields through which the footpath runs are largely over exposed and its impossible to see if there are any walked routes shown on the ground along footpath No19. There is a circular shadow in the field just due east of where it meets the unclassified road (UC/5/68); it is unclear what this is but it looks most like a mark or stain on the photo.	PROW Unit
Aerial image (black and white)	1970's	The field layout is very similar to the 1940's map with the exception of the removal of some of the smaller enclosures. The picture quality is greater than for the 1940's image. It is not possible make out any walked alignment along the route of footpath No19.	PROW Unit
Aerial image (colour)	1980's	The field layout has changed very little. There is a large grey/brown "scar" in the field just beneath where footpath No19 runs due west of Meadows Farm; it is unclear what this but is just south of the alignment of the footpath. It is not possible make out any walked alignment along the route of footpath No19.	PROW Unit
Aerial image (colour)	2024	The field layout is largely unchanged. There is no indication of a walked line in the field immediately off path no30 (Mill Lane) however where it leads north westerly in the adjoining field there is a very distinct line along route of footpath No19.	Google Maps
Planning Inspectorate Consistency Guidelines			<p>Withdrawn from the Planning Inspectorate website Nov 2024</p> <p>[Withdrawn] Definitive map orders: consistency guidelines - GOV.UK</p>

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Highways and Transport Committee

19 June 2025

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Part III Section 53; Application MA/5/250 for the addition of two public footpaths between Public Footpaths 13 and 21 in the Parish of Mobberley.

Report of: Philip Cresswell, Executive Director of Place

Report Reference No: HTC/47/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: Mobberley

Decision

Purpose of Report

1. This report concerns an application submitted on behalf of Mobberley Parish Council, seeking to amend the Definitive Map and Statement for Cheshire East Borough Council. The application requests the addition of two public footpaths between Public Footpaths 13 and 21 in the Parish of Mobberley ("FP13" and "FP21") under Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (the "81 Act"). The report includes an analysis of the claim, comprising of a review of user evidence, an assessment of historical information and consideration of the relevant legal context. It also outlines the legal tests required for a Definitive Map Modification Order ("DMMO") to be made. Based on this evidence, the report makes a recommendation for a quasi-judicial decision by Members, as to whether a DMMO should be made to add two public footpaths to the Definitive Map and Statement.
2. The work of the Public Rights of Way team contributes to the Corporate Plan vision of Enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East, with the commitments of Unlocking prosperity for all and Improving health and wellbeing, and the policies and objectives of the Council's statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Executive Summary

3. This report outlines the investigation into an application made in July 2015 by Mr David Swan on behalf of Mobberley Parish Council. The application seeks to add two public footpaths between FP13 and FP21 as shown on Plan No. WCA/051 (“The Plan”). This report analyses consultations carried out in respect of the claim, historical evidence, witness evidence and highlights the legal tests for a DMMO to be made. Based on this information the report makes a recommendation for a quasi-judicial decision by Members on whether or not an Order should be made.
4. The evidence consists of the application accompanied by user evidence from fourteen individuals and photographs of the application routes. The documentary evidence that has been examined includes the Mobberley Tithe and Apportionment Map, Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photographs. The user evidence is consistent in describing the two routes crossing fields, unobstructed and in regular use for a period of twenty years or more. The claimed use is said to have occurred without force, secrecy or permission, during a period likely satisfying the statutory test for the presumed dedication of a public right of way; namely continuous use from approximately 1995 to 2015.
5. Section 53(2)(b) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 places a duty on the Council to keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review and to make such modifications as appear requisite. One such circumstance is outlined in section 53(3)(c)(i). This is where the discovery by the Authority of evidence shows that two public footpaths claimed should be recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement. The report concludes on the balance of probabilities that there is sufficient evidence that there is a reasonable allegation that public rights should be recorded and that a DMMO should be made to add the two footpaths between FP13 and FP21.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways & Transport Committee is recommended to:

1. Decide that a Definitive Map Modification Order is made under Section 53(3)(c)(i) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to modify the Definitive Map and Statement by the addition of a public footpath between Point A-C-D on Plan WCA/051 and a public footpath between Point B-C on Plan WCA/051.
2. Note that in the event of objections being received, Cheshire East Borough Council will be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or public inquiry.

Background

6. The application was registered by Cheshire East Borough Council on 7th July 2015 on behalf of Mobberley Parish Council (“the Applicant”) to add two Public Footpaths between FP13 and FP21. The application consisted of ten completed user forms. An additional four completed user evidence forms were submitted during the investigation.

Description of the application routes

7. The first application path starts from FP13 at Point A on the Plan (OSGR SJ 7827 8012) and runs for approximately 7 metres in an easterly direction crossing a strip of land not registered with the Land Registry but forming the access drive to the United Utilities Sewage Plant. On the eastern side of the access drive the route runs through a gap in fencing and continues in an easterly direction following the northern edge of a field for approximately 233 metres to a break in a hedged field boundary at OSGR SJ 7850 8008. The route continues running in an easterly direction along the edge of a pasture field for approximately 135 metres to the junction with the second path at Point C on the Plan (OSGR SJ 7863 8005). From Point C the route continues running in an easterly direction for approximately 6 metres to a break in a hedge boundary at OSGR SJ 7864 80005. A pedestrian gate has been recently installed at this point by persons unknown. It is not installed during the relevant period of use. The route then continues in an easterly direction for approximately 113 metres to a break in a hedge boundary at OSGR SJ 7875 8002. It then continues for approximately 100 metres to a termination on FP21 at Point D on the Plan at OSGR SJ 7882 7996.
8. The second application route commences on FP13 at Point B on the Plan (OSGR SJ 7825,7984). Here, there had been a gap in the hedge on the east side of the access drive although a second point of access has been identified during the investigation which runs from FP13 for approximately 9 metres across an unregistered piece of land and runs through a gap to the east side of a field gate at OSGR SJ 7826 7984. The route at Point B is the application point of entry. The route continues in a north easterly direction crossing fields currently under pasture for approximately 239 metres to a gap in a hedge field boundary at OSGR SJ 7848 7992 . At this point the ground is muddy and crosses the hedge boundary covering land owned between Landowner 2 and Landowner 3. The route then continues in a north easterly direction for approximately 202 metres to terminate at the junction on the first route at Point C on the Plan.
9. The claimed footpaths are well-trodden routes across agricultural land, with the exception of the section that follows the access drive to the treatment plant. The access drive is surfaced with a sealed material. Both routes have a variable and undefined width, except at the boundary crossings. In line

with current guidance on footpath widths, it appears that a width of at least 2 metres has been established through use.

Legal Matters

10. Section 53(2)(b) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (the “81 Act”) places a duty on the Council to keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review and make such modifications to the Map and Statement as appear requisite in consequence of the occurrence of certain events.
11. One such event is set out in Section 53(3)(c)(i) which provides that a modification is required where:
 - a. “(c) the discovery by the authority of evidence” which (when considered with all other relevant evidence available to them) shows:-
 - b. “(i) that a right of way which is not shown on the map and statement subsists or is reasonably alleged to subsist over land in the area to which the map relates, being a right of way such that the land over which the right subsists is a public path, a restricted byway or, subject to section 54A, a byway open to all traffic.”
12. The evidence supporting such a claim may consist of historical evidence or user evidence or a combination of both. All of the relevant evidence must be evaluated and weighed to determine whether, on the ‘balance of probabilities’ the claimed public rights can be shown to exist. Any other issues, such as safety, security, suitability, desirability or the effects on property or the environment, are not relevant to this legal test and must not be taken into account.
13. Where the evidence in support of the application includes or consists of user evidence, section 31(1) of the Highways Act 1980 (the “1980 Act”) is applicable. It provides that:
 - a. “Where a way.....has been actually enjoyed by the public as of right and without interruption for a full period of twenty years, the way is deemed to have been dedicated as a highway unless there is sufficient evidence that there was no intention during that period to dedicate it.”
14. This requires that the public must have used the way without interruption and “as of right”; that is without force, secrecy or permission. Section 31(2) states that “the 20 years is to be calculated retrospectively from the date when the right of the public to use the way is brought into question”. This is often referred to as the “date of challenge.”

15. For public rights to be established through long use, as stated above, a twenty-year period must be identified during which time, use can be demonstrated. Where no challenge to the use of a claimed route has occurred, the relevant twenty-year period for presumed dedication under Section 31 of the Highways Act 1980 may be taken as the twenty years immediately preceding the date of the application. In this case, a challenge to the use of Route B- C appears to have arisen in 2014, when the land was sold and subsequently fenced. The fencing affected part of the claimed route, which was reportedly in use by the public at the time. Accordingly, the relevant 20 year period for assement of this route is form 1994 to 2014. For the route A-C-D, no earlier challenge was identified. Therefore, the relevant 20 year period is taken to be the twenty years immediately prior to the date of the application being registered, which is 7th July 2015. The applicable period is therefore 1995 to 2015.
16. Fencing has been mentioned at Point A by Landowner 1 during consultation who informed us that they had erected fencing at Point A for a brief time but at an unknown date before it was torn down. Aerial photographs suggest that fencing was in place in 1992/3. However, it has been clarified from interviewing path users that the date of the fencing is unknown and it seems that there was no obstruction to use as a gap remained and walkers continued to use the route without interruption. Fencing was erected after the application was made demonstrated by the closure of a gap at Point B.
17. In the case of, *R (on the application of Godmanchester Town Council) v Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2007)*, the House of Lords considered the proviso in section 31(1) of the 1980 Act, which states:

...unless there is sufficient evidence that there was no intention during that period to dedicate it”.
18. The ruling clarified that presumed dedication of a way can be rebutted if there is sufficient evidence that there was no intention by the landowner to dedicate the way, during the relevant twenty-year period. What is regarded as ‘sufficient evidence’ will vary from case to case. The Lords addressed the issue of whether the “intention” in section 31(1) had to be communicated to those using the way, at the time of use, or whether an intention held by the landowner but not revealed to anybody could constitute “sufficient evidence”. The Lords also considered whether use of the phrase “during that period” in the proviso, meant during the whole of that period. The House of Lords held that a landowner had to communicate his intention to the public in some way to satisfy the requirement of the proviso. It was also held that

the lack of intention to dedicate means “at some point during that period”, it does not have to be continuously demonstrated throughout the whole twenty year period.

19. In addition to the above, under Section 31 (6) of 1980 Act there is provision for a landowner to deposit a statement and plan of the land they own and a declaration in subsequent periods to negate the intention to dedicate public rights of way over that land. This deposit is registered with the Authority and is a means of protecting the land from public rights being established by use from the date of the declaration. As a consequence of the enactment of the Growth and Restructure Act 2013 a declaration should be submitted every twenty years to keep a continuous negation of intention in place.
20. A Statement and Declaration dated 18 March 2016 was submitted by Gateley PLC on behalf of the former landowner of land covered by Point A-C and B-C on the Plan. The Statement and Declaration has been submitted in the format of the form set out in Schedule 1 Commons (Registration of town or Village Greens) and Dedicated Highways (Landowner Statement and Declaration) (England) Regulations 2013. The landowner, acknowledges under Part B of the Statement that there is a public footpath coloured purple, which forms part of the Definitive Map already. The landowner also acknowledges that there is a public footpath coloured blue (not yet on the Definitive Map.) Although the landowner acknowledges that this path is not on the map the landowner also acknowledges (under Part E) that the public footpath coloured blue is the subject of a Definitive Map Modification Order (“DMMO”) application from Mobberley Parish Council. The deposit is protection for the succeeding landowner from any other public rights of way arising from use from the date of the deposit.
21. Public rights of way may also be established under common law based on evidence of public use. Unlike under statutory provision (such as Section 31 of the Highways Act 1980), common law does not require a specific duration of use, such as twenty years. Instead, it relies on the principle that public use, together with evidence of an implied or express intention by the landowner to dedicate the route, can establish a public right of way.

To establish a right of way under common law, it must be shown that:

- The landowner had the capacity to dedicate the land as a public right of way,
- or
- There is evidence that no such capacity existed (for example, if the land was held by a statutory body with no power to dedicate).

Where the identify of the landowner is unknown or unclear, consistent and

credible evidence of public use, without challenge or obstruction, may be sufficient to infer dedication.

In this case it seems that prior to the application being made, fencing appears to have been constructed. Aerial photography from 1992/3 appears to show fencing across unregistered land alongside FP13 at Point A. At point B there are remnants of a field boundary alongside the access drive. There appears to have been no challenge to user at the field hedge boundaries. The use appears to have continued without interruption or objection from the landowners, further supporting the potential establishment of public rights, particularly over unregistered land, through presumed dedication under common law principles.

The Investigation

The documentary evidence

22. Various historical documentary sources have been examined. The documentary evidence that has been examined is described below and a list of the evidence can be found at Appendix 2.

Tithe Map Mobberley Parish or Township 1838

23. Tithe Awards were prepared under the Tithe Commutation Act 1836, which commuted the payment of a tax (tithe) in kind, to a monetary payment. The purpose of the award was to record productive land on which a tax could be levied. The Tithe Map and Award were independently produced by parishes and the quality of the maps are variable. It was not the purpose of the awards to record public highways. Although depiction of both private occupation and public roads, which often formed boundaries, is incidental, they may provide good supporting evidence of the existence of a route, especially since they were implemented as part of a statutory process. Non-depiction of a route is not evidence that it did not exist; merely that it did not affect the tithe charge. Colouring of a track may or may not be significant in determining status. In the absence of a key, explanation or other corroborative evidence the colouring cannot be deemed to be conclusive of anything.
24. In this case the Tithe map for Mobberley shows a field layout that largely corresponds with the present configuration, excluding areas that have since been developed for housing. It clearly shows the field boundaries over which the claimed route passes and shows Mobberley brook running east to west and Mobberley village to the south which is much smaller than it is today. The fields on the west are described as being in the ownership of Ralph Gerard Leyster the second field described as the "old meadow" is under the

ownership of Barratt and Irlam. The third field is shown split into two and under Peter Legh holding the “smithy meadow” and Joseph Watkinson also holding “meadow”. The eastern field is owned by Ralph Gerard Leycester and is described as the “bridge meadow”. A mill is shown on the Tithe Map close to the location of Point C on the plan. Whilst the Tithe Map indicates a footpath which would be identified as FP13 before it was diverted, there are no indications of a path on the application routes.

Ordnance Survey (“OS”) Maps scale 6”: 1 mile

25. OS mapping was originally for military purposes to record all roads and tracks that could be used in times of war; this included both public and private routes. These maps are good evidence of the physical existence of routes, but not necessarily of status. Since 1889 the Ordnance Survey has included a disclaimer on all its maps to the effect that the depiction of a road is not evidence of the existence of a right of way. It is argued that this disclaimer was solely to avoid potential litigation.
26. OS mapping from 1882 has been examined and they show similar field patterns that exist now where the claimed route runs, with Mobberley brook running west to east on the north side of the fields. The claimed routes are not marked on the 6 inch to 1 mile series OS maps examined. FP21 is consistently shown on all the maps by double pecked lines and annotated with the words “F.P”. Housing around Oldfield Drive and Carlisle Close was developed from the 1970’s.
27. OS map sheet XXVII, 6 Inch to 1 mile, published 1882 and 1899, 1911, and 1946 shows open fields, a similar layout except the second field to the east of Point A is split into 2 fields. Mobberley Brook runs to the north and FP21 runs south to north and crosses the brook at a location on the Plan close to Point D. The map shows a cul de sac track as double solid lines running from Town Lane in a northerly direction and which is now incorporated into FP13 and crossing Oldfield Lane. The track terminates south of Point B on the Plan.
28. OS map sheet XXVII, 6 Inch to 1 mile, 1971 shows the layout described above and by this date housing has been developed around Oldfield Drive. The cul de sac track is shown extended to “sewage works” and also shows the effect of a diversion of FP13 further north along this extension of the track. There are no paths showing where the claim routes run.

Aerial Photos 1971/3 to 2010

29. Various aerial photographs have been consulted dating from a series 1971/3 to 2010. The black and white 1971/3 series and a colour 1982/5 series show no easily visible signs of trodden paths on the application routes. Housing around Oldfield Drive can be seen. There appears to be no fencing along the access to the sewage treatment plant only the remnant field boundary hedge on the west side of the drive.
30. The colour 1992/3 series aerial photography shows housing around Carlisle Close is largely complete. There is a visible hedge or fenceline and vegetation along both sides of the access drive to the sewage plant. Point B is obscured by vegetation but a track which may be a vehicle track can be seen leading from Point B in a north east direction across the field. There are no generally visible trodden paths.
31. The series 1999/2003 aerial photography visibly shows the application path from Point B running north-east but it is not clear if this is an animal or human trodden path. There appear to be trodden paths running west-east from Point A. The quality of image is not enough to determine if the hedge and fenceline along the access track is intact or broken. The following series 2005/6 does indicate visible trodden paths on the application route from Point A on the Plan and running easterly along the north boundary of the field, partially hidden on the photography by the treeline. From Point B on the Plan a trodden path is visible running towards Point C on the Plan. A 2010 series is better quality and shows a very clear image of a trodden path from Point A on the Plan. Shadows indicate fencing was in place alongside the access drive, although a trodden route also crosses the line. The path runs in an easterly direction along the north boundary of the field partly hidden by the tree line. Point B on the plan is partially hidden by the tree line but a trodden path is visible leading north east to Point C on the Plan.
32. The series of aerial photographs are good evidence for viewing the development of housing south of the application area, evidence for the fencing which ran alongside the access drive to the sewage plant and evidence of paths that are showing as trodden across pasture grass on all the series of photographs.
33. Site visit, 25.02.2025
34. A site visit of the two fields of the eastern part of the claim incorporating FP21 and east of Point C on the plan and the visible structures that could be viewed from FP13 was undertaken on 25th February 2025 and a copy of the

photographs of the claimed routes can be viewed at **Appendix 3**. Photographs taken in 2015 were submitted with the application and a selection are included in this appendix.

The Definitive Map Process

35. The Definitive Map and Statement is based on surveys and plans produced in the early 1950's by each parish in Cheshire and was a requirement of the National Parks and Countryside Act 1949. It was a survey; of all the ways they considered to be public at that time via production of a map and associated statement of each route. A Draft and Provisional Map were produced for consideration before a final Definitive Map and Statement came into being. The surveys were used as the basis for the Draft Map and for the Mobberley area the date of the survey is 1 June 1953 which is referred to as the "relevant date".

36. All three stages of the Definitive Map process, the Draft, Provisional and Definitive Map show FP13 and FP21. FP13 was diverted twice in 1957 and 1978 and the current line is reflecting those diversions. The claimed routes are not claimed on the parish survey or at the Draft Stage of the Definitive Map stages.

37. Land Registry Information

38. The application routes cross land in the ownership of four different landowners in addition to some unregistered land. Landowner 1 owns a small area of land to the north of Point A and have registered an interest in the track leading to the sewage plant. Landowner 2 took on the ownership in 2017 and owns the 2 fields on the western part of the application area that is where the paths run between Points A-C and B-C. Landowner 3 owns the first field east of Point C and Landowner 4 owns the eastern field incorporating Point D on the Plan. Landowner 5 owns land which was taken on after the applications for footpaths to be recorded were made. The application route cuts through a corner of the land. There is also a very small triangle of unregistered land off the lane where footpath 13 runs from near Point B to a few metres where the field gate is found and a second unregistered piece of land runs between FP13 and the access drive to the sewage plant. Notice of the Application was served on this land from 19 March 2025 to 16 April 2025

User Evidence

39. Ten user evidence forms were submitted with the application in 2015. A further four user evidence forms have been submitted during the investigation. This is a total of 14 completed user evidence forms. An analysis of the user evidence can be viewed at Appendix 4.
40. Out of the original ten-user evidence forms it has been found during investigations that one person has deceased and five could not be contacted. However, their evidence is included in the summary at Appendix 4. Interviews with seven of the users were taken in February 2025.
41. No witnesses have been challenged whilst using the route or knows of anyone else who has been challenged whilst using the route. Only a few people remembered a brief time (although not when this occurred) of fencing being erected across Point A. Access was not impeded during this time as there was still a gap at Point A. No obstructions are mentioned either in the absence of a challenge to public use, the date of the application is taken as the date to calculate the retrospective 20-year period of deemed dedication – i.e. 1995-2015 for the first path and 1994-2014 for path 2 which was crossed by a new boundary enclosing an extended garden area. Although usage does go back much further than this to at least 50's/60's.
42. The user evidence indicates that the claimed routes were used frequently, with individuals reporting use on a weekly or monthly basis. All user evidence forms assert that the routes were used on foot and that their belief in the public footpath status is based on personal experience and their observation of other local people walking the same routes. Each user submitted a marked plan identifying the claimed paths they walked, all of which align with the application plan (Plan reference WCA/051). Of the users, seven individuals were interviewed in more detail. Each described using the route regularly, often in the company of others. Several witnesses were able to name additional people with whom they had walked the route and reported seeing many other walkers using the same paths. This suggests that the application routes were widely and consistently used by the public over a long period, even though this level of use may not be fully reflected in the number of individual user forms or on the usage graph compiled as part of the application.
43. During a site inspection in February 2025, it is clear that in the present day the route is well walked as there are visible wear marks on the ground and two dog walkers were witnessed using the route at the time of inspection.
44. No witnesses report having sought or been granted permission to use the claimed routes. While several witnesses acknowledged knowing the

landowners (reflecting the close-knit nature of the community) they stated that use of the routes occurred without express permission and was assumed to be accepted or unchallenged. One witness recalled, during childhood, being shouted at by a landowner adjoining the land north of the A-C-D route. However, no formal action was taken to prevent use and the witness and others continued to walk the route without interruption. This suggests that any objection was isolated and did not amount to a clear or sustained challenge to public use.

45. All users say that they were undertaking a variety of activities including dog walking, taking exercise, going to church, school or pub, or just out with their family and friends. Many have lived a long time or had connections in the village going back 50 plus years and have experience of walking the route from childhood onwards.
46. In terms of furniture on the claimed routes all users confirm that they have always been able to pass the claimed routes. Today the application point at B is fenced although there was an alternative access at the date of the application submission; a gap adjacent to a field gate east of Point B and shown in photographs taken in 2016. There is also a gap at the field boundary between points B and C and a 2.5m modern wooden pedestrian gate at Point D (although no one is sure who installed it). The application photographs indicate this gate was inserted at a much later date. At Point A there is a wide gap in a post and wire fencing.
47. During interviews most people do not remember seeing any signs on the claimed routes and certainly never any prohibitive signs. A minority of users stated they remember some sort of sign high up on a tree that had wording similar to **“no fishing no shooting”** approximately somewhere near Point C. Nevertheless, users made it clear that there were no signs prohibiting people from walking across the fields. .
48. During interviewing it has also been a consensus that at Point A there was a through route, although fencing was acknowledged to have been erected at some date. Two of the users interviewed clarified the point and said that they remembered this fencing across the route being in place for a very brief period of approximately 6 months. They were not able to recall the dates and confirmed that even when it was fenced there was still a gap at Point A that users could get through to continue usage. .
49. A few of the witnesses were actually surprised during interviews that the routes weren't already public rights of way on the Definitive Map and

Ordnance Survey maps as they had always believed them to be so from childhood.

50. The evidence from users provides the evidence of use for the relevant 20 years or more prior to 2014/2015. The use had been overt, and without permission from any of the 4 surrounding landowners. There is no known exact date when fencing appeared across Point A, however fencing is shown to appear on the 1992/3 aerial photography so it could have been approximately around this date. During interviewing the users do not recall fencing preventing use of the paths and whilst a few remember a brief spell of the fencing across Point A they said it didn't impede their onward journey as even then there was still a gap to one side of Point A.

Consultation and Engagement

51. Consultations were sent out in November 2024 which included the Mobberley Parish Council (they are also the applicant), Ward Councillor, user groups and affected and neighbouring landowners.
52. Ward Councillor Hannah Moss, provided a brief response in support of the application.
53. Mobberley Parish Council responded to say they fully support the application and that the claimed routes had been used by walkers, school children, people exercising their dogs and more and commented that it would be good to have the paths official and maintained.
54. Landowner 1 owns the water sewage treatment site just north of Point A and sent a detailed response to say that they had various concerns relating to health and safety which had been previously expressed in planning applications dating from 2011 and 2015. They stated that they had noted the user evidence with this case and had no comments to make on the claimed route B-C-D however they object and dispute the claimed footpath A-C-D due to health and safety concerns. In particular they expressed concerns about vehicles and pedestrians mixing as there is no pavement along the edge of the lane and lorry drivers visibility splay is very restricted on the lane leading to the water sewage site. They also claim that at Point A they had blocked up a gap but it had been forced open by the public. No dates were given as to when this action was taken and it seems that evidence cannot be provided. The title documents for this landowner indicates that the company were not in possession of the access track during the relevant period although any actions could be a challenge to the use.

55. Landowner 2 over which runs the application routes A-C and B-C initially wanted to know the basis of the application. A subsequent response stated that, as they had only purchased the land in 2017, they had limited knowledge of the history of the site. They stated that they were not currently aware of the public gaining access into the fields and made an objection to the addition of the application routes. They also noted from the consultation plan crossed gardens of houses on Carlisle Close and queried how these paths could be used if gardens were in the way of passage.
56. Landowner 3 was met on site and proposed no objection in principle to the application route C-D.
57. Landowner 4 suggested that they have no objection to the application route C-D.
58. A local resident expressed concern that there could be some level of disruption for the residents of Carlisle Close from the application route B-C and suggested only one path A-C-D would be better for anyone wanting to get across the fields.
59. The Green Lane Association sent a response with no evidence for the application routes. An additional comment related to the status of FP13 and FP21 which is not relevant to the current application.

Reasons for Recommendations

60. Under Section 53 of the 1981 Act, the Council has a duty as the Surveying Authority to keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review. Section 53 (c) allows for an authority to act on the “discovery of evidence” this suggests that the DM needs to be amended. The authority must investigate the evidence and decide on the outcome as to whether or not to make a DMMO. Section 53(2)(b) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (the “81 Act”) requires that the Council shall keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review and make such modifications to the Map and Statement as appear requisite in consequence of the occurrence of certain events.
61. Witness evidence from before 1994 and since then shows regular and uncontested use by walkers. There are fourteen user evidence forms with 7 interviews having been undertaken and the evidence indicates a greater number of people having used the application routes. Interviews with users indicate the paths have a strong reputation as being public paths. There appears to have been no interruption in use for users going back to at least the 1950s.

62. A twenty year period must be identified during which time use can be established. Where no challenge to the use has occurred, this period can be taken as the twenty years immediately prior to the date of the application. In this case the date of challenge was the date of the application being registered on 7th July 2015 and therefore the period that satisfies the legal test is the period from 1995 to 2015 except for the path Points B to C which investigation has established crossed land which was fenced in 2014. The relevant period for these points is 1994-2014.
63. The documentary evidence has shown that there was no supporting map or plan to support the claim. Aerial photographs have been consulted and in a small part indicate trodden paths during the relevant period which support the claims made.
64. Landowners in part have not rebutted the claim. One landowner has raised issues of safety and security which are not relevant to the decision to be made here. If an Order was made and was confirmed, these are matters that could be addressed. The same landowner claims fencing was erected but no date or proof of date is available and witness evidence is consistent in stating that a gap has always been present in the relevant period. The witness of users suggests that fencing was not an obstruction to use. Fencing can be seen to have been erected after 2015 across the former gap at Point B, however the gap at Point A appears to look the same now as it did in 2015. One landowner has expressed concern that the successful confirmation would have an impact on their land and has requested only one path is taken forward.
65. Under section 31(1) of the Highways Act 1980 public footpath rights can come into existence by prescription unless there is evidence to the contrary. Therefore the landowners must provide evidence to that effect, which is normally evidence of a challenge or notices being put up during the relevant twenty year period. Whilst there is a claim that fencing was erected to prevent use, it is contradicted by the user evidence stating that there has always been a gap. Landowner 3 and 4 agree in principle to the public footpaths.
66. The primary commencement point of usage from the village of Mobberley at Point B is shown on the application plan and runs from what had been a gap in hedging alongside the access track. Whilst a gap to the side of a field gate may now be more frequently used, any use since 2015 is negated from public rights arising by the S31(6) deposit described above at paragraph 19.
67. The evidence in support of this application must show, on the balance of probabilities that public footpath rights subsist or are reasonably alleged to subsist along the claimed route. It is considered that there is sufficient user evidence to support an allegation of the existence of footpath rights. It is also

considered that there is a lack of evidence of rebuttal of the claim by landowners. On the balance of probabilities, the requirements of Section 53(3)(c)(i) have been met and it is recommended that the Definitive Map and Statement should be modified by the addition at public footpaths shown on Plan WCA/051 between points A-C-D and B-C.

68. The work of the Public Rights of Way team contributes to the Green aim of the Corporate Plan, the “thriving and sustainable place” priority, and the policies and objectives of the Council’s statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Other Options Considered

58. If the Council were to take no action in response to the application, it would fail to comply with Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which requires the Council to keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review and to be modified where appropriate, based on the discovery of relevant evidence.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

59. The council is fulfilling its statutory obligations under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as outlined in the Legal Matters section of this report.
60. The Human Rights Act is also of relevance. Whilst article 1 to the first protocol (peaceful enjoyment of property) and article 8 (right to respect for family, private life and home) are engaged, it is important to note that these rights are qualified, not absolute, which means that they can be interfered with in so far as such interference is in accordance with domestic law and is necessary in a democratic society for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. It is considered that any interference occasioned by the making of a Modification Order is both in accordance with domestic law (the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) and is in the public interest as it is necessary in a democratic society for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others, namely the public who wish to use the way. Should Members resolve that a Modification Order be made in accordance with highways legislation, this is merely the start of the legal process. Once a Modification Order is made, it must be publicised, and any person will have an opportunity to formally object to it. Should objections be received, the Modification Order would have to be referred to the Secretary of State who may hold a Public Inquiry before deciding upon whether or not to confirm the Modification Order.
61. Please note that the Council will not disclose the user evidence forms that form part of the background documentation at this stage in the

process. The Council considers that the information provided within the user evidence documentation is exempt information under s1&2 Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

62. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, there is no such statutory right prior to an Order having been made - persons affected are entitled to the information in the event that an Order is made following the Committee decision.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

63. If objections to an Order lead to a subsequent hearing/inquiry, the Council would be responsible for any costs involved in the preparation and conducting of such. The maintenance of the Public Right of Way, if added to the Definitive Map and Statement, would fall to the landowner and Council in line with legislation. The associated costs would be borne within existing Public Rights of Way revenue and capital budgets.

Policy

64. The work of the Public Rights of Way team contributes to the Corporate Plan vision of Enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East, with the commitments of Unlocking prosperity for all and Improving health and wellbeing, and the policies and objectives of the Council's statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Corporate Plan 2025-2029

Vision: Enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East

Commitments –

- Unlocking prosperity for all
- Improving health & wellbeing

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The legal tests under section 53 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 do not include an assessment of the effects under the Equality Act 2010.

Human Resources

- a. There are no direct implications for Human Resources.

Risk Management

- b. There are no direct implications for risk management.

Rural Communities

- c. There are no direct implications for Rural Communities.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- d. There are no direct implications for Children and Young People

Public Health

- e. The recommendations are anticipated to offer a positive overall impact on the health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents.

Climate Change

- f. The recommendations will help the Council to reduce its carbon footprint and achieve environmental sustainability by reducing energy consumption and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Adele Mayer adele.mayer@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Application Plan WCA/051 Appendix 2: Historical document list Appendix 3: Photographs of claimed route. Appendix 4: User evidence analysis chart
Background Papers:	The background papers and files relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.

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Key

- Claimed
- Footpath
- Bridleway
- - - Restricted Byway
- BOAT

Page 309



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Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
 Application MA-5-250 for an Order to add 2 footpaths between Public Footpath 13 and 21 Mobberley

Plan No.
WCA/051



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APPENDIX 2**List of Archive Documents –****Application No. MA/5/250****Application to add two public footpaths between existing footpaths 13 and 21 in the parish of Mobberley**

PROW = Public Rights of Way Unit

CRO = Cheshire Record Office

TNA = The National Archives, Kew

Primary Sources	Date	Site Shown/Mentioned	Reference Number/Source
Tithe Records			
Tithe Map	1838	Shows field patterns over which claimed route passes and Mobberley brook.	CRO EDT 274/2
Ordnance Survey Maps			
O.S. 6 inch to 1 mile Cheshire Sheet XXVII	1889	Shows existing footpaths 13 & 21 but not claimed. Carlisle close to south not built yet.	PROW/Cheshire East Council
O.S. 6 inch to 1 mile	1882	Shows existing footpaths 13 & 21 but not claimed. Carlisle close not built yet.	PROW/Cheshire East Council
O.S 6 inch to 1 mile	1910	Shows existing footpaths 13 & 21 but not claimed. Carlisle close not built yet.	PROW/Cheshire East Council
O.S. 6 inch to 1 mile	1946	Shows existing footpaths 13 & 21 but not claimed. Carlisle close not built yet.	PROW/Cheshire East Council
O.s 6 inch to 1 mile	1971	Shows existing footpaths 13 & 21 but not claimed. Carlisle close not built yet in entirety as today.	PROW/Cheshire East Council
Modern day OS online mapping	2020's	Shows existing footpaths 13 & 21, Most of Carlisle close is built now.	PROW/Cheshire East Council
Local Authority Records			
Draft Map	1950's	Claimed routes not shown as PROW but existing PROW	PROW Unit

		numbers 13 and 21 shown.	
Provisional Map	1952	Claimed routes not shown as PROW but existing PROW numbers 13 and 21 shown.	PROW Unit
Definitive Map & Statement	1953	Claimed routes not shown as PROW but existing PROW numbers 13 and 21 shown. Statement also describes existing footpaths 13 and 21. Noted footpath 13 been altered several times with extinguishments / diversions	PROW Unit
Additional records			
Photos	2025	Site photos taken in 2025 of claimed route	PROW Unit – see photo sheet
Section 31 (6) Deposits	2016	2 Statements deposited (i) 18 th March 2016 (ii) 19 th May 2016	PROW Unit

PHOTOGRAPHS 2024 AND 2025



ABOVE RECENT GATE AT POINT D
BELOW BETWEEN POINT C AND D





BELOW BRIDGE CARRYING FP21 AT POINT D



BETWEEN POINTS C AND D



FIELD GATE TO EAST OF POINT B



POINT A FROM FP13



POINT B FROM FP13



PHOTOGRAPHS FROM 2015

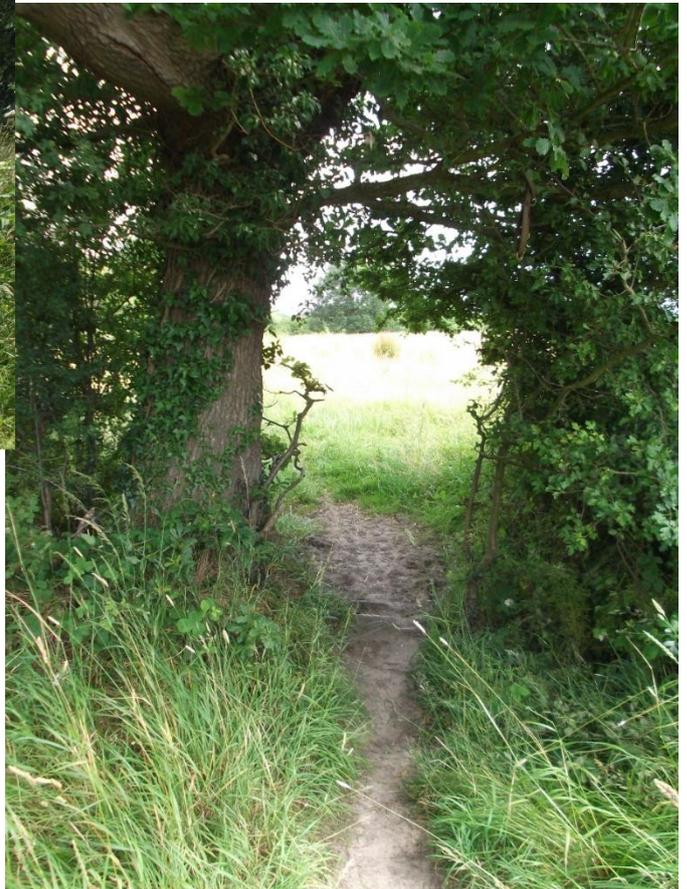
POINT A FACING EAST



POINT BETWEEN A AND C FACING WEST



FACING EAST BETWEEN POINT A AND C



BETWEEN POINTS B AND C FACING WEST



BETWEEN POINT B AND C





POINT B FACING EAST



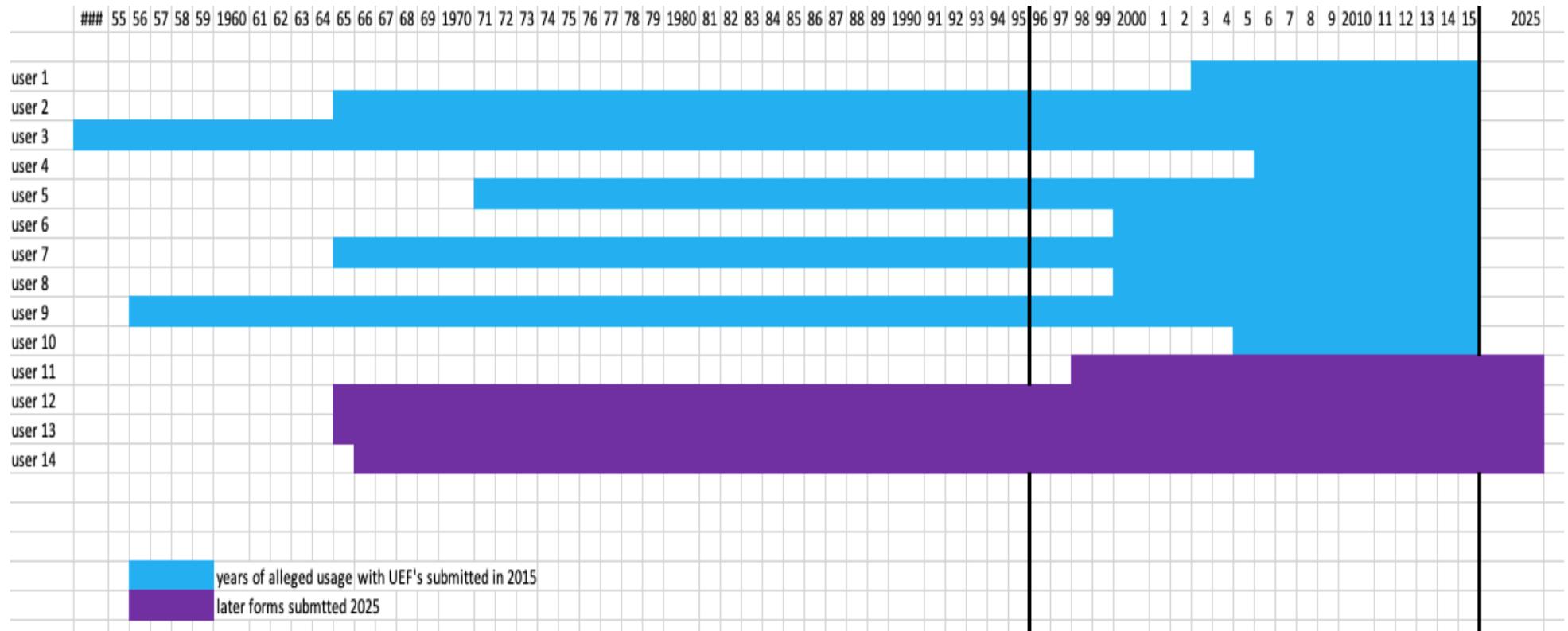
POINT B FACING WEST



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Appendix 4 - User evidence analysis chart showing years of use

Case Ref: MA/5/250 – Claimed footpaths between existing footpaths no: 13 and 21, Mobberley



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Highways and Transport Committee

19 June 2025

Highways Act 1989 section 118: Proposed extinguishment of Public Footpath No. 29 in the Parish of Knutsford

Report of: Philip Cresswell, Executive Director of Place

Report Reference No: HTC/02/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: Knutsford

Decision

Purpose of Report

1. The report outlines the investigation to extinguish Public Footpath No. 29 in the Parish of Knutsford following receipt of an application from Puro Property Partnership.
2. The work of the Public Rights of Way team contributes to the Corporate Plan vision of Enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East, with the commitments of Unlocking prosperity for all and Improving health and wellbeing, and the policies and objectives of the Council's statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Executive Summary

3. This report outlines the investigation to extinguish Public Footpath No. 29 in the Knutsford and includes a discussion of the consultations carried out in respect to the proposals and the legal tests to be considered for a diversion order to be made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
4. The recommendation is that a public path extinguishment order be made under section 118 of the Highways Act Act 1980 on the grounds that Cheshire East Council is satisfied that it is necessary to do so as it is no longer needed for public use, based on DEFRA guidance,

Government guidance on diversion or extinguishment of public rights of way that pass through private dwellings, their curtilages and gardens, farmyards and industrial or commercial premises, published in August 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways & Transport Committee is recommended to:

1. Decide that a public path extinguishment Order be made under section 118 of the Highways Act 1980 for Knutsford Public Footpath No.29 in the Parish of Knutsford, on the grounds that the Public Footpath is no longer needed for public use.
2. Decide that public notice of the making of the Order be given and in the event of there being no objections within the period specified, the Order be confirmed in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Council by the said Act.
3. Note that in the event of objections being received, Cheshire East Borough Council be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or Public Inquiry.

Background

5. Public Footpath No. 29 in the Parish of Knutsford commences at its junction with King Street (B5083) at O.S. grid reference SJ 7520 7872 and runs in a generally east north easterly direction for approximately **11 metres** to O.S. grid reference SJ 7521 7872 at its junction with Old Market Place.
6. An application has been received by Cheshire East Borough Council from Puro Property Partnership to extinguish Public Footpath No.29 in the parish of Knutsford. Under section 118 of the Highways Act 1980, an appropriate authority is empowered to make a Public Path Extinguishment Order where it appears expedient to the Council to extinguish the path on the ground that it is not needed for public use and that an alternative route is available via the public footway along King Street and Old Market Place.
7. A planning application (**ref:16/1717M**) for a ground level dining area (Piccolinos Restaurant, King Street, Knutsford), was approved in 2016. The consequent construction, fencing and furniture triggered an application to claim a public footpath should be added to the Definitive Map & Statement.

8. The application was successful on appeal, whereby a Planning Inspector determined the application so that a Definitive Map Modification Order was made under section 53 (2) (b) of the Wildlife & Countryside Act, to add Public Footpath No. 29 Knutsford to the definitive map. This order was dated 16th August 2018 and subsequently confirmed.

Consultation and Engagement

9. The Ward Members for Knutsford, Knutsford Town Council, the user groups, statutory undertakers, and the Council's Nature Conservation Officer have been consulted.
10. The Peak & Northern Footpath Society responded to the informal consultation, stating that their inspector notes that Knutsford Footpath No. 29 is not accessible due to the outdoor dining area at the restaurant but are not objecting to the proposed extinguishment.
11. Cadent Gas and Openreach both responded and each respectively said that they had no objection to the proposed extinguishment.
12. Two objections have been received to the proposal. The first from Knutsford Town Council stating that in their view, Knutsford Footpath No. 29 provides a less steep route from King Street to Old Market Place, which is beneficial to people with mobility issues or to people when the road is icy.
13. The second objection is from The Green Lane Association, who object on the grounds that Knutsford Footpath No. 29 is a useful route for the public and note that the route was blocked by fencing as early as 2015, prior to the granting of planning permission for the outdoor dining area.

Reasons for Recommendations

14. The application states that Knutsford Public Footpath No. 29 not needed for public use. The outdoor dining area is crucial to the viability of the business of Piccolinos restaurant.
15. An alternative route is available via the public footway along King Street and Old Market Place. This is considered like for like in its convenience to the definitive line of Knutsford Public Footpath No. 29. Both routes start at the public footway King Street and end at the car park in Old Market Place. The alternative is 11 metres longer which in practice takes slightly more time to walk.
16. DEFRA guidance published in 2023. *Government guidance on diversion or extinguishment of public rights of way that pass through private dwellings, their curtilages and gardens, farmyards and industrial or*

commercial premises. This sets out Government policy on changes to public rights of way through gardens, farmyards and other commercial premises. Acknowledging that the public may not be comfortable following a path through a contained space, the guidance gives authorities the scope to balance the needs of both landowner and the public in cases where rights of way cross residential, agricultural and commercial premises.

17. The guidance states that in determining applications, the authority should consider a diversion to the right of way in question, or an extinguishment.
18. Relating to Knutsford Public Footpath No. 29 no diversion to the definitive line is available. An extinguishment is the favoured option.

Other Options Considered

19. If the authority was to do nothing, then the current definitive line of Knutsford Public Footpath No. 29 would still be in place on the definitive map but not accessible due to the outdoor dining area. This is an unsatisfactory situation as it is misleading to the public.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

20. Once an Order is made it may be the subject of objections. If objections are not withdrawn, this removes the power of the Local Authority to confirm the Order itself and may lead to a hearing or Public Inquiry. It follows that the Committee decision may be confirmed or not confirmed. This process may involve additional legal support and resources.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

21. If objections to an Order lead to a subsequent hearing/inquiry, the Council would be responsible for any costs involved in the preparation and conducting of such. The maintenance of the Public Right of Way, if it remains on the Definitive Map and Statement, would fall to the landowner and Council in line with legislation. The associated costs would be borne within existing Public Rights of Way revenue and capital budgets

Policy

22. The work of the Public Rights of Way team contributes to the Corporate Plan vision of Enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East, with the commitments of Unlocking prosperity for all and Improving health and wellbeing, and the policies and objectives of the Council's statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Corporate Plan 2025-2029

Vision: Enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East

Commitments –

- Unlocking prosperity for all
- Improving health & wellbeing

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

23. An assessment in relation to the Equality Act 2010 has not been carried out by the Public Rights of Way Network Management and Enforcement Officer for the area.

Other Implications

24. *Human Resources* - There are no direct impact for human resources

Risk Management

There are no direct implications for risk management

Rural Communities - There are no direct implications for Rural Communities.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)-

There are no direct implications for Children and Young People

Public Health

The recommendations are anticipated to have no overall impact on the health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents.

Climate Change

It is not anticipated that the recommendations will affect the Council to reduce its carbon footprint.

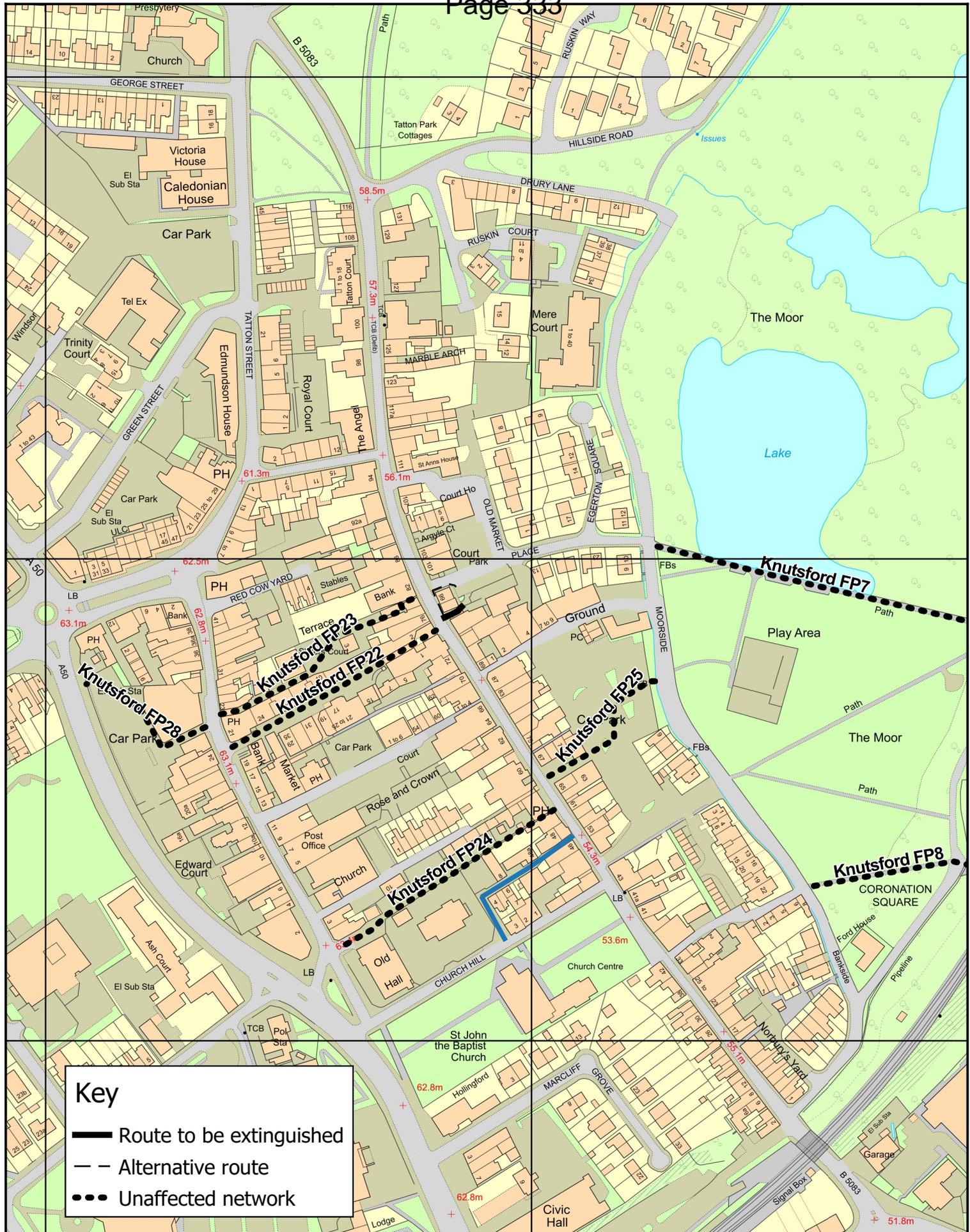
Access to Information

Contact Officer:

Mark Greenhough

mark.greenhough@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Appendices:	1 Knutsford FP 29 Plan 2 Knutsford FP29 Plan small scale 3 Photographs 4 Defra guidance re diversions and extinguishment
Background Papers:	The background papers and files relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.



THE CHESHIRE EAST BOROUGH
 COUNCIL (FOOTPATH NO. 29) IN THE
 PARISH OF KNUTSFORD PUBLIC PATH
 EXTINGUISHMENT ORDER 2025

Plan No.
 HA 158

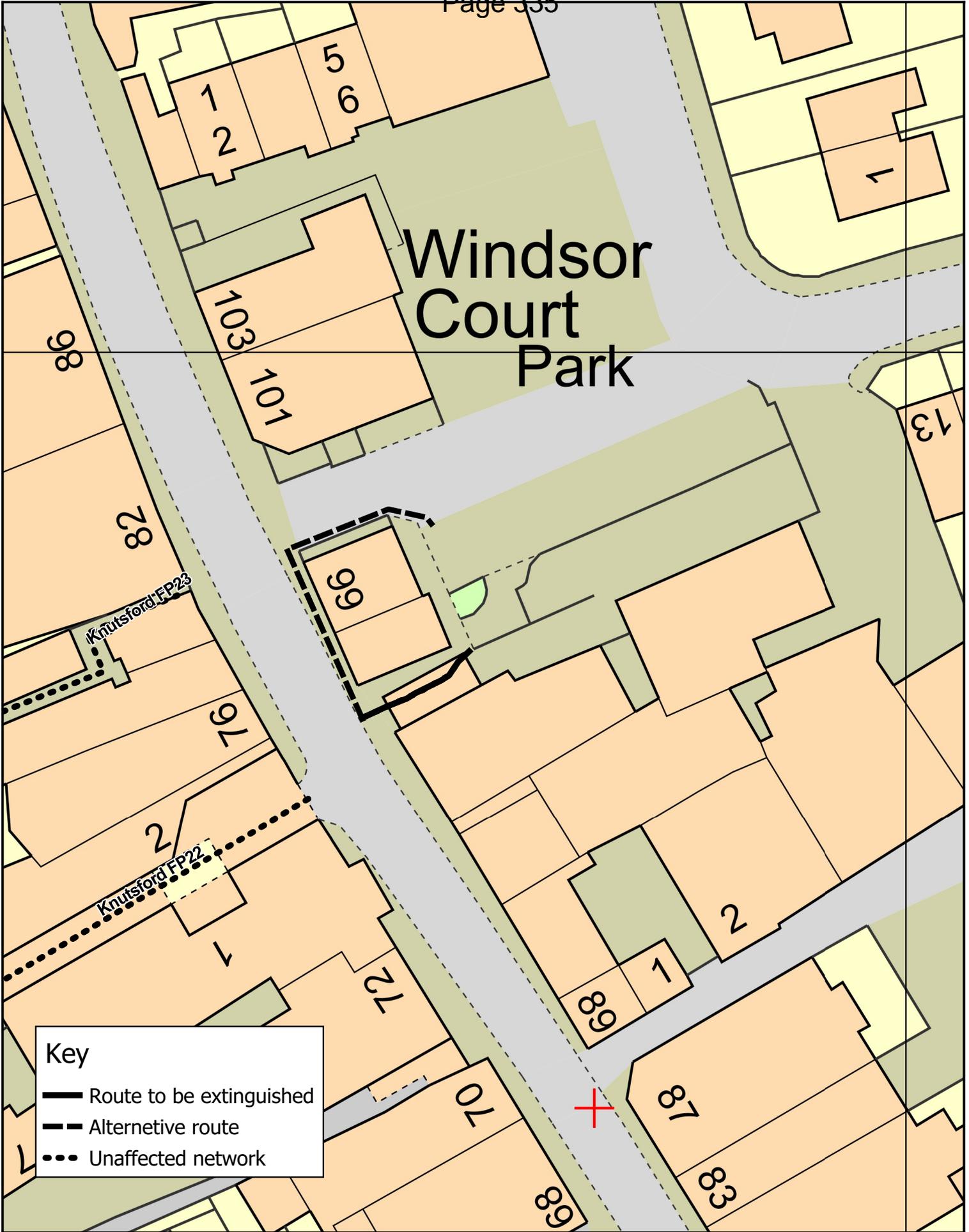


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Key

-  Route to be extinguished
-  Alternative route
-  Unaffected network



1:400

THE CHESHIRE EAST BOROUGH COUNCIL (FOOTPATH NO. 29 IN THE PARISH OF KNUTSFORD) PUBLIC PATH EXTINGUISHMENT ORDER 2025

Plan No.
HA 158



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Knutsford FP 29 photos.

King St. junction



Old Market Place



Old Market Place looking back towards King Street



Car park at the rear of Picollinos



Knutsford FP29 termination



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Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Government guidance on diversion or extinguishment of public rights of way that pass through private dwellings, their curtilages and gardens, farmyards and industrial or commercial premises

Date: August 2023

Version: 1.0

Please note

1. Sections 118ZA and 119ZA of the Highways Act 1980 and section 54B of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 have not yet been commenced and are not in force.
2. Therefore, this guidance currently applies only where local authorities choose to consider diverting or extinguishing a right of way under s119 and s118 respectively of the Highways Act 1980.
3. Defra will inform local authorities in good time prior to commencing 118ZA and 119ZA of the Highways Act 1980 and section 54B of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

We are the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. We are responsible for improving and protecting the environment, growing the green economy, sustaining thriving rural communities and supporting our world-class food, farming and fishing industries.

We work closely with our 33 agencies and arm's length bodies on our ambition to make our air purer, our water cleaner, our land greener and our food more sustainable. Our mission is to restore and enhance the environment for the next generation, and to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.



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www.gov.uk/defra

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Extracts from Hansard 23 March 2016

As a Government Minister, Baroness Williams of Trafford made the following statements:

“The right to apply will be supplemented by guidance that will effectively act as a presumption to divert or extinguish public rights of way that pass through the gardens of family homes, working farmyards or commercial premises where privacy, safety or security are a problem.

The guidance will give authorities more scope to confirm orders made in the interests of the landowner in circumstances where a right of way may cause hardship because it goes through the garden of a family home, a working farmyard or other commercial premises.

I am happy to reaffirm the commitment made by the previous Government that we will review, within two years of implementation of the reforms package, how effective the right-to-apply provisions and the accompanying guidance have proved to be. The review will send a message to authorities that the Government are determined that the new policy should work and that if guidance does not bring about sufficient changes, we will consider the introduction of further measures.”

Introduction

1. This guidance sets out Government policy on changes to public rights of way through gardens and curtilages of private dwellings, working farmyards and other commercial premises. It sets out how local authorities should respond when considering diverting or extinguishing public rights of way under s119ZA and s118ZA of the Highways Act 1980, or when considering making a ‘modification consent order’ under section 54B of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It also applies where local authorities choose to consider diverting or extinguishing a right of way under s119 and s118 respectively of the Highways Act 1980. It should be read in conjunction with all other relevant guidance, including rights of way Circular 1/09 (or as revised) and sections 118, 119, 118ZA and 119ZA of the Highways Act 1980 and Section 54B of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; the relevant web links are appended to this guidance.

Context

2. The majority of public rights of way cross privately owned land. In general, members of the public and farmers/landowners are used to the concept and see no inherent inconsistency between the fact that land may be privately owned and the presence of public routes across it for both passage from A to B, and enjoyment of the countryside and the natural environment.

3. However, the general view of both groups can change markedly in situations where public rights of way pass through contained spaces such as private gardens, farmyards or commercial premises.
4. Members of the public may not be comfortable following a path through a contained space of this type because doing so feels like infringing on the privacy of a house owner, or potentially disrupting, or being endangered by, activities within a farmyard or commercial premises. Such path alignments can deter people from exercising the public's right to use the path.
5. The less contained such a space is, the fewer the public's concerns tend to be. People are used to walking past a house along an adjacent road or pavement, and this feels acceptable because they are clearly outside its visible domain. The degree of proximity can also make a big difference. Few people are troubled by using public paths across privately owned land around a house or farm, so long as they feel they can keep a reasonable distance from it. But the more that a route over privately owned land brings people into close proximity with the associated house or operational farm buildings, the less likely they are to feel comfortable using it.
6. Even where a public path through a private garden or farmyard has existed for centuries, and perhaps even pre-dates the use of the land for these purposes, there may be one or more reasons why its presence could be problematic for the landowner:
 - a. A reasonable expectation of being able to relax in the garden or spend time with family and friends without strangers appearing in the same contained space;
 - b. Greater concerns today than in previous eras about the security of children or property in such situations;
 - c. An increased use of public rights of way for general leisure and recreational use rather than local people using them to get around the locality, particularly where rights of way are promoted by local authorities.
 - d. A concern that having a public path close to the house has a negative impact on the value of the property;
 - e. Farmyards or commercial operations putting the public potentially at risk, or being regularly disturbed, because of the limited space within which a route passes.

Guiding principles

7. This guidance applies where a public right of way passes through:
 - a. A garden or curtilage of a residential dwelling
 - b. a farmyard or
 - c. other commercial or industrial premises
8. It does not apply to gardens, dwellings or commercial premises which do not have the necessary permission for the current use of the land (most land and property will have an authorised use, either by way of existence of that use prior to the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 or, post 1947, either by way of an implemented planning permission or an authorised use as a consequence of a relevant period of use).
9. In all cases where the guidance applies, the order-making and confirming authority should weigh the interests of the owner and/or occupier against the overall impact of the proposal on the public as a whole. They should note that reducing or eliminating the impact of the current route of the right of way on the owner and/or occupier, in terms of privacy, security and safety, are important considerations to which due weight should be given. In relevant circumstances, the duty on authorities to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 may be a consideration.
10. The order-making authority should therefore be predisposed to make, and the confirming authority will be similarly predisposed to confirm, an order if it satisfies the respective relevant legislative tests. There are different tests for extinguishment and diversion; these are set out in s.118 and s.119 (respectively) of the Highways Act 1980. The relevant web links are appended to this guidance.
11. In such circumstances, it is in the public interest that any change to remove or reduce the impacts on the property owner or occupier of the existing public right of way should, wherever possible, involve diversion or replacement of the way rather than extinguishment alone. Before making an order, authorities should consider all the options available to them and/or to the landowner, and should be open to using the combination of powers, agreements and management arrangements that best suit the circumstances, whether mentioned below or not.
12. These options include:
 - a. Diversion of the right of way onto land already owned/occupied by the owner/occupier.
 - b. Diversion of the right of way onto other land –
 - i. either by agreement with that landowner, or

- ii. where agreement is not forthcoming, using powers under s119 (5) to require the owner or occupier to underwrite compensation payable to a third party.
- c. Concurrent extinguishment of the right of way and creation of an alternative route under s118 and s25 and/or s26 Highways Act 1980 –
 - i. on land already owned/occupied by the owner/occupier, or
 - ii. on other land by agreement with that owner/occupier, or
 - iii. using the power under s26 to create a route across other land, bearing in mind the provisions of s28 of the Act.
- d. Extinguishment of the right of way where other existing rights of way (including carriageways) would meet the need of the public for access
- e. Extinguishment of the right of way where an existing path is not needed for public use. (For the purposes of section 118, in order to be not needed for public use, a public right of way does not necessarily have to be unused. In assessing non-use, authorities should disregard any temporary circumstances that prevent or diminish the use of the way, such as obstructions).

13. Authorities should also consider:

- a. The potential for improving a path so diverted or replaced (for example, by replacing stiles with gates).
- b. Where a route is to be extinguished, the scope for the owner/occupier to defray the cost of improving an existing alternative route or of creating an alternative route

Conclusion

14. In determining an application to which this guidance applies, it is for the authority to consider the case on all its merits taking into account all the statutory requirements and available guidance. In making its decision as to whether the existing path should be diverted or extinguished, an authority should consider in particular the impact of the existing path on the property owner and/or occupier against the benefit that having the right of way through the land brings to the public, taking account of this guidance.

Appendix

Links to legislation referred to in the guidance

Highways Act 1980

Section 25: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/section/25>

Section 26: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/section/26>

Section28: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/section/28>

Section118: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/section/118>

Section 118ZA: [not yet commenced]

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/section/118ZA>

Section 119: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/section/119>

Section 119ZA: [not yet commenced]

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/section/119ZA>

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Section 54B: [not yet commenced, see Schedule 7 of the Deregulation Act 2015]

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/20/schedule/7/enacted>

Town and Country Planning Act 1947

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1947/51/enacted>

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Section 17: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/37/section/17>

OPEN

Highways and Transport Committee

19 June 2025

**Appointments to Sub-Committees,
Working Groups, Task & Finish Groups,
Panels, Boards and Joint Committees**

**Report of: Janet Witkowski, Acting Governance, Compliance and
Monitoring Officer**

Report Reference No: HTC/03/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: N/A

Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report seeks approval from the Highways and Transport Committee to appoint the bodies referred to in the report and to nominate members to them.
- 2 This report contributes to the Council's objective of being an effective and enabling organisation – effective and responsive governance, compliance and evidence-based decision-making.

Executive Summary

- 3 The Council, at its annual meeting on 14 May 2025 [Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 14th May, 2025, 11.00 am | Cheshire East Council](#) approved the political representation on its main committees, and appointed those committees. The appointment of certain sub-committees, working groups, panels and boards is a matter for the relevant service committee.
- 4 This report concerns those bodies which fall to be appointed by the Highways and Transport Committee or by the committee in conjunction with other service committees. Where political proportionality is applicable, the agreed conventions and methods of calculation have been applied.

- 5 Appointments to Outside Organisations are made by the Corporate Policy Committee and will next be reviewed in May 2027.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Highways and Transport Committee

1. Appoints the sub-committees, Task and Finish Groups, working groups, panels, boards and joint committees for 2025-26, and the member appointments to them, as set out within this report.
2. Where appropriate, agrees to submit member nominations to the bodies below to the Head of Democratic Services.
3. Note the Terms of Reference for the Home to School Transport Joint Committee Task and Finish Group.

Background

- 6 Bodies which the Highways and Transport Committee is required to appoint to:

Body	Purpose	Membership 2024-25	Proposed Membership 2025-26
Public Rights of Way Consultative Group	The Public Rights of Way Consultative Group is an established meeting of users, Elected Members and Officers of Cheshire East Council which operates to enable stakeholders to engage in constructive debate and discussion about issues of law, policy, principle and work programming relating to Public Rights of Way. The Group meets twice a year via Microsoft Teams and receives twice yearly updates from the Public Rights of Way team between meetings.	Councillors L Crane and H Faddes. <i>(x2 members of the Highways and Transport Committee)</i>	Councillors H Faddes and L Braithwaite
Home to School Transport Joint Committee	The Terms of Reference are appended to this report.	N/A (Suggested 5 Members:	Councillors M Goldsmith, H Faddes, C Hilliard

Task and Finish Group		<i>3 x Children and Families Committee members and 2 x Highways and Transport Committee members).</i>	
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Consultation and Engagement

- 7 There has been consultation with Group Leaders and Administrators in relation to the political representation of the bodies set out within this report.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 8 In accordance with the Constitution, the Highways and Transport Committee is responsible for the appointment of the bodies referred to in this report.

Other Options Considered

9	Option	Impact	Risk
	Do nothing	The Council's Constitution requires these bodies to be appointed in line with the legislation referenced in this report. Not appointing to these bodies would negatively affect the Council's ability to make decisions in an open and transparent manner.	Failure to comply with the Council's Constitution and the legislation referenced in this report could leave the Council open to legal challenge.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 10 The Highways and Transport Committee has power to appoint informal working groups, panels or task groups with defined terms of reference and timeframes.

- 11 The Committee also has power and/or has historically been asked to nominate members to each of the sub-committees particularly where they fall within the remit of the Committee.
- 12 The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, made pursuant to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, make provisions in respect of the political group representation on a local authority's committees in relation to the overall political composition of the Council. The legislation applies to the decision-making committees and sub-committees of the Council and requires that, where proportionality applies, and seats are allocated to different political groups, the authority must abide by the following principles, so far as is reasonably practicable:
- Not all of the seats can be allocated to the same political Group (i.e., there are no single group committees).
 - The majority of the seats on the body are to be allocated to a political Group with a majority membership of the authority.
 - The total number of seats on all ordinary committees and sub committees allocated to each Political Group bears the same proportion to the proportion on the full Council.
 - The number of seats on each ordinary committee allocated to each Political Group bears the same proportion to the proportion on full Council.
 - The proposals contained in this report meet the requirements of the legislation.
 - The 1990 Regulations require Political Group Leaders to notify the Proper Officer of the Groups' nominations to the bodies in question.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 13 There are no financial implications that require an amendment to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Human Resources

- 14 There are no HR implications.

Risk Management

- 15 Failure to comply with the Act and Regulations when appointing its committee memberships would leave the council open to legal challenge.

Impact on other Committees

- 16 There are no implications on other committees.

Policy

- 17 There are no direct policy implications.

<p>Commitment 3: An effective and enabling organisation</p>
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<p>Effective and responsive governance, compliance and evidence-based decision-making.</p>
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 18 There are no direct equality, diversity and inclusion implications.

Other Implications

- 19 There are no other implications.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy) :</i>			
Sal Khan	Interim Director of Finance, Deputy Section 151	13/05/25	19/05/25
Janet Witkowski	Acting Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer	13/05/25	15/05/25

<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Julie Gregory	Acting Head of Legal Services	12/05/25	13/05/25
Steve Reading	Finance Manager	12/05/25	13/05/25

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services Brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 –Home to School Transport Joint Committee Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference
Background Papers:	N/A

Appendix 1 –Terms of Reference

Overview & Scrutiny Review Scoping Document	
Project Title:	Home to School Transport – Joint Committee Scrutiny
Link with the Corporate Objectives	
<p>This review will support the following Corporate Plan objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Education, skills and life-long learning leads to employment and roles in the community. b) Communities connected through an improved, accessible rural and urban transport network including active travel. c) Children and young people thrive and reach their potential with targeted support when and where they need it. d) Financially sustainable council, enabled by council-wide service transformation and improvement. 	
Project Background:	
<p>This project will enable members of both Highways & Transport Committee and Children & Families Committee to jointly scrutinise the Councils' arrangements for provision of Home-to-School Transport, including SEND. The Council provides transport for approximately 4000 students to educational establishments in the borough and beyond. The MTFS provides an increase in budget (FY2025-26) of £1.5 million with further growth expected in future years. Transport services make up 17% of the overall children's revenue budget. There have been recent planned changes to the council's policies, procedures and procurement arrangements for home-to-school transport and members are interested to understand the effectiveness of these and what else can be done to ensure services provide value-for-money.</p>	
Project Objectives:	<p>The objectives of this project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable members to scrutinise recent developments in the Councils Home-to-School travel policy and consider what opportunities there are for further improvement. • To enable members to scrutinise arrangements for procurement of home-to-school transport contracts to consider whether they are satisfied the Council achieves value-for-money. • To scrutinise arrangements for delivery of all aspects of the home-to-school travel policy, especially the initiatives that rely of cross directorate working and integration of capital and revenue budgets – examples could include delivery of Available Walking Routes and/or integration with public local bus services. • To scrutinise the arrangements for delivering savings and efficiencies relating to Home-to-School transport that are incorporated in the adopted MTFS. • To identify any areas of national legislation that can be brought into the project for discussion.

Appendix 1 –Terms of Reference

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To learn from what is happening national and locally, including bringing ideas in from the sub regional project the Council is engaged in on home to school transport.
<p>Timescales:</p>	<p>This scrutiny project is intended to be completed within the 2025/26 civic year.</p> <p>Task & finish group will meet informally in July with a view to holding monthly meetings to be attended by members, lead officers (as and when required) and Democratic Services.</p> <p>Task & Finish group to decide on whether update reports will be taken to C & F and H & T committees through the process.</p> <p>Final report will be taken to C & F committee with a view to looking nearer the time at how it is fed into H & T Committee.</p>
<p>Lead Officers:</p>	<p>Gill Betton and Clair Kiffin – Children’s and Families Directorate</p> <p>Richard Hibbert, Jenny Marston, and Mike Mitchell – Infrastructure and Highways Directorate</p> <p>Officer from Finance, Public Rights of Way and Cheshire East Highways will be available to support, as necessary.</p>

Highways & Transport Committee Work Programme 2025 - 26

Report Reference	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item	Is the report for decision or scrutiny?
18 September 2025								
HTC/04/25-26	First Financial Review 25/26	To scrutinise and comment on the First Financial Review and Performance position of 2025/26 and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Executive Director Resources, and S151 Officer	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny/Decision
HTC/14/24-25	Application to approve a Lane Rental Scheme	To outline the process required to develop a Lane Rental Scheme and to consider implementation of the scheme	Executive Director of Place	No	Yes	No	TBC	Decision
HTC/44/24-25	Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)	The Council's current Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) covers the period 2011-2026. It is a statutory duty of the Council to prepare and publish a ROWIP, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 s60, and it is therefore proposed to develop a new ROWIP.	Executive Director of Place	Yes	Yes	No	No	Decision
HTC/12/25-26	Delay to Department for Transport decision on Middlewich Eastern Bypass*	To consider the Council's options as a result of the delay to the Department for Transport's (DfT) programmed funding decision on the Middlewich Eastern Bypass.	Executive Director of Place	No	No	Yes	No	Decision
HTC/14/25-26	Local Transport Plan - Strategy and Investment Plan	The report presents the work undertaken in refreshing the Local Transport Plan for Cheshire East. The committee are asked to note the findings from the consultation on vision, aims and priorities and approve the proposal to launch a further round of consultation on the draft strategy and investment plan, which will set the strategic framework for transport in the coming years	Executive Director of Place	Yes	Yes	No	TBC	Decision
20 November 2025								
HTC/05/25-26	Second Financial Review 25/26	To scrutinise and comment on the Second Financial Review and Performance position of 2025/26, and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Executive Director Resources, and S151 Officer	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny/Decision

Highways & Transport Committee Work Programme 2025 - 26

HTC/06/25-26	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2026/27-2029/30	To provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2025	Executive Director Resources, and S151 Officer					Scrutiny
22 January 2026								
HTC/07/25-26	Third Financial Review 2025/26	To scrutinise and comment on the Third Financial Review and Performance position of 2024/25, and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Executive Director Resources, and S151 Officer	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny
HTC/08/25-26	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2026/27 to 2029/30 Provisional Settlement	To provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2025.	Executive Director Resources, and S151 Officer	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny and Decision
2 April 2026								
HTC/09/25-26	Service Budgets 2026/27	To set out the allocation of approved budgets for 2025/26 for services under the Committee's remit, as determined by Finance Sub Committee	Executive Director Resources, and S151 Officer	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny

**This report may need a "Special" meeting outside of the normal committee cycle (e.g. in July).

Highways & Transport Committee Work Programme 2025 - 26

Task and Finish Groups

Group	Membership	Established	Purpose
Home to Schol Transport – Cross Directorate with Children & Families Committee	<p>H & T Members M Goldsmith H Faddes C Hilliard</p> <p>C & F Members M Beanland L Crane E Gilman B Puddicombe</p>	May 2025	This project will enable members of both Highways & Transport Committee and Children & Families Committee to jointly scrutinise the Councils' arrangements for provision of Home-to-School Transport, including SEND. The Council provides transport for approximately 4000 students to educational establishments in the borough and beyond. The MTFS provides an increase in budget (FY2025-26) of £1.5 million with further growth expected in future years. Transport services make up 17% of the overall children's revenue budget. There have been recent planned changes to the council's policies, procedures and procurement arrangements for home-to-school transport and members are interested to understand the effectiveness of these and what else can be done to ensure services provide value-for-money.

Briefing Reports/Reports for noting

Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Expected Circulation Date via the Members Hub
Public Rights of Way Annual report 2024 - 25	To inform members about the work of the Public Rights of Way (PROW) team, including achievements and challenges.	Nicola Lewis-Smith -Public Rights of Way Manager	TBC

Note: These reports will be circulated outside of committee meetings.

[Library folder - Reports for Noting - Reports for Noting | Cheshire East Council](#)

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